

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF NCAA DIVISION I HBCU ATHLETIC
DIRECTOR'S PERSPECTIVE OF THE CURRENT STATE OF INTERCOLLEGIATE
ATHLETICS

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to illuminate the perception of the current National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I (DI) structure from the perspective of Historically Black College and University (HBCU) administrators, primarily DI HBCU Athletic Directors. HBCU athletic programs are placed in a precarious situation, in which, administrators are forced to operate as marginalized institutions within a structure that perpetuates resource based inequities between institutions. As historically Black institutions, HBCUs also operate within the confines of the greater socially oppressive racial structure that permeates between the American higher educational context and intercollegiate athletics context. Although there is literature pertaining to HBCUs in the broader intercollegiate athletics literature covering a range of topics (i.e., consumer behavior, academic success, history, organizational effectiveness), there continues to be a dearth in the literature of the voices and experiences of HBCU athletic administrators and how they navigate within the current NCAA structure.

Thus, this examination utilized an intrinsic case study approach including a semi-structured interview with an Athletic Director from a NCAA DI HBCU. From this dialogue, four main themes emerged. First, (Re)defining Who We Are, which refers to the necessity for HBCUs to understand who they want to be and how they want to represent themselves moving forward. Second, Combatting the Label, which speaks to the perception of the impact that the label of an HBCU, or low resource institution, has and how HBCU athletic programs desire to overcome misconceptions. Third, Separation

and Exclusion, refers to the perception of parameters and barriers to access that HBCU athletic programs face in the current structure of the NCAA. Lastly, Resource Disparities, which refers to the acknowledgement of the disparity in resource distribution in the current NCAA DI structure.

This research demonstrates examples of how the perception and positioning of HBCU athletic programs at the NCAA DI level is symptomatic of continued racial and class discrimination. Additionally, the implications call for re-evaluation of continued participation in the NCAA as well as development of countermeasures to the imposed devaluation of HBCU athletics.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Gary Cheeks, Mattie Cheeks, Garvasa Cheeks-Durriseau, and all who have supported me along the way.

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NOMENCLATURE

HBCU	Historically Black College or University
HWCU	Historically White College or University
MEAC	Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference
NCAA	National Collegiate Athletic Association
SWAC	Southwestern Athletic Conference

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Intercollegiate athletics, namely the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), have been thrust into a pivotal moment in the history of amateur sport. Faced with issues like diversity, student-athlete graduation rates, resource acquisition, labor issues, and various other topics; intercollegiate athletics are in a state where policy and procedure changes are necessary to continue to evolve the state of sport in higher education as well as sustain its level of current financial success (see Clotfelter, 2012). However, in this membership driven organization, all members have not been afforded the same opportunities to prosper or granted access to full participation in the activities represented within the structure of the NCAA (see Cooper, Cavil, & Cheeks, 2014; Evans, Evans, & Evans, 2002; Gaither, 2013; Koch, 1985; McClelland, 2011; Padilla & Baumer, 1994). Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have historically been the most marginalized of these member institutions within the NCAA (Cooper, Cavil, & Cheeks; 2014).

Cooper, Cavil and Cheeks (2014) state that, just as in the broader society, racial prejudice has played a role in the opportunities granted to HBCU institutions within intercollegiate athletics. Prior to racial integration in sport and currently, HBCUs have been disadvantaged in garnering resources but have fought to sustain themselves in direct competition with their higher education counterparts (Evans, Evans, & Evans; 2002). As intercollegiate athletics has evolved in America, HBCUs have had their fair

share of success in the midst of adversity (Cooper, Cavin, & Cheeks; 2014). However, their collective stories have rarely been represented at length then or now. Although literature pertaining specifically to HBCU athletics does exist (e.g., Chalk, 1976; Fink, 2003; Greenlee, 2012; Seymour, 2006; McClelland, 2011; etc.), contemporary literature has lacked a wide range of perspectives on American intercollegiate athletics from the lens of HBCUs. Thus, this study seeks to be situated within this gap in literature to illuminate the specific perspective of NCAA DI HBCU Athletic Director's. Through offering a platform to gain insight into the current state of HBCU athletics at the NCAA DI level, a greater understanding can be obtained to further identify strategies to develop and sustain HBCU athletics.

Statement of the Problem

The problem examined in this study is the dearth of literature that conveys the present perceptions of the current state of the NCAA at the DI level by HBCU administrators, or more specifically Athletic Directors. HBCU athletic programs are placed in a precarious situation, in which, administrators are forced to operate as marginalized institutions within a structure that perpetuates resource based inequities between institutions. As historically Black institutions, HBCUs also operate within the confines of the greater socially oppressive racial structure that permeates between the American higher educational context and intercollegiate athletics context. It is in this realization that prompts the need to understand the challenges of HBCU athletic programs from the leadership perspective as these individuals are in positions of decision making to influence change within their programs and beyond.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to illuminate the perception of the current NCAA DI structure from the perspective of HBCU administrators, primarily DI HBCU Athletic Directors. This study is designed to capture the voice of the individuals who are in positions of authority within their respective institutions with the ability to promote change and implement strategies that can assist the progression and perseverance of HBCU athletics. Moreover, this study is designed to also assist in understanding the potential impact of race and racism on the dissemination of resources within the NCAA and throughout intercollegiate athletics.

Significance of the Study

Literature pertaining to intercollegiate athletics continues to evolve and cover a wide range of issues. However; there is one glaring focus that remains seemingly devoid in conversation, HBCU athletics. Although there is literature pertaining to HBCUs in the broader intercollegiate athletics literature covering a range of topics (i.e., consumer behavior, academic success, history, organizational effectiveness; see Armstrong, 2001; Cooper, Cavi, & Cheeks, 2014; Cooper, Hawkins, 2014; Johnson, 2013, McClelland, 2011), there continues to be a dearth in literature of the voice and experiences of HBCU athletic administrators and how they navigate within the current NCAA structure. It is acknowledged that HBCU athletics may potentially be at risk of continuing in the future, primarily because of their inability to secure the amount of funding that other institutions and programs have been able to historically garner (McClelland, 2011). Thus, it is

essential to connect with those in positions with the ability to affect change and promote actionable strategies to encourage the growth and development of these institutions.

However, scholars often venture on the peripheral of their respective research areas trying to glean insight into a glimpse of what may be the issue at large.

Additionally, scholars fit theories and rationale to phenomena like puzzle pieces making associations assumed to dictate outcomes and ultimately answers to questions deemed important within the confines of academia. What potentially gets lost in the midst of what is and what is not deemed relevant and important, is the notion that how can we expect practitioners in positions of authority to implement changes that scholars deem important if it is not relevant nor important to said practitioners. It is in this regard, that the scope of this research is to provide a platform which can have direct feedback as to what may or may not be relevant to practitioners at this time in order to accurately and holistically develop strategies and solutions to enhance the financial possibilities presented to HBCU athletic programs.

Research Questions

This research study was designed in an exploratory manner so that a wide range of subjects could be covered. Specifically, the main objectives of the interviews will be to gain insight into the following issues:

1. What is the perception of the current NCAA DI structure and how HBCUs are situated within the current NCAA structure?
2. What is the perceived impact of the historic resource deprivation in the dissemination of resources in the current NCAA DI structure?

3. What is the perceived impact of the historic label of HBCU status in the dissemination of resources in the current NCAA DI structure and how HBCUs are situated within the current NCAA structure?
4. What is the perceived financial outlook of HBCU athletics in the current NCAA DI structure and how HBCUs are situated within the current NCAA structure?

Operational Definitions

African American. An ethnic group of persons with shared cultural experiences and a social history grounded in both Africa and America, or Americans of African ancestry (Martin, 1991; Smith, 1992).

Black. A socially constructed category, which is attributed to persons of African descent (Martin; 1991; Smith, 1992).

Critical Race Theory. A theoretical lens encompassing several tenets which provide a foundation to critically examine and challenge the nature of racism in American society.

HBCU. Historically Black Colleges and Universities are defined by the Education Act of 1965 “as institutions of higher learning that were established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was, and is now, the education of black Americans” (Pub. L. No.89-329).

Intercollegiate Athletics. A term utilized to describe the collective group of American higher education institutions that compete in various sports at the amateur level.

MEAC. The Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference is a NCAA DI conference comprised of 13 institutions primarily situated along the Eastern United States coastline.

NCAA. The National Collegiate Athletic Association is a voluntary association of about 1,200 colleges and universities within three divisions, comprised of athletic conferences with the explicit purpose of the administration and supervision of intercollegiate athletics.

PWIHE. A Predominantly White Institution of Higher Education is an institution founded with the explicit purpose historically for the education of White Americans.

Race. A socially constructed categorization based on a person or group's phenotypical biological characteristics and traits (Coakley, 2009; Eitzen & Sage, 2003; Singer & Carter-Francique, 2013)

Racism. A belief in the inherent superiority of one racial category over others, manifested through discriminatory attitudes, actions, policies, practices, and structures (Coakley, 2009; Singer & Carter-Francique, 2013; Waller, 1998).

Resource Deprivation. The concept of systemic practices, covert and overt, that perpetuate systemic oppression through the inequitable distribution of resources (i.e., physical, financial, human, etc.) to people of color as well as the institutions in which they are represented (e.g., HBCUs).

SWAC. The Southwestern Athletic Conference is a NCAA DI conference comprised of 10 institutions primarily located in the southern United States.

Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the topic of this research study as well as describing the research gap that this work seeks to fill. Also, the problem and issue that this research seeks to address was described. The research questions that helped to guide this particular research were also listed, followed by operational definitions to assist the reader in following the verbiage utilized in this research study. Chapter II will review the relevant literature on HBCUs, HBCU athletics, intercollegiate athletics as well as issues central to HBCUs. The theoretical framework of CRT is introduced and discussed as to the relevance to the study and topic of this research. Chapter III will then go on to discuss the methodology utilized for this research; to include, a description of the research design, the participant included in this research study, how the data was collected and analyzed, and finally the researcher's subjectivity statement. Chapter IV will then go into the findings from the data analysis with some additional relevant literature to the participant's responses. Lastly, Chapter IV will discuss how the theoretical framework of CRT assisted in the understanding of the findings and is relevant to the broader literature on HBCU athletics. Followed by both the practical and theoretical implications with the limitations of the research and future research directions.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In accordance with the purpose of this study, to illuminate the perception of the current NCAA DI structure and how HBCUs are situated within the current NCAA structure from the perspective of DI HBCU administrators, this section will provide a background and describe the theoretical foundation that will guide this research. More specifically, I will describe the history of HBCUs, HBCU athletics, and the NCAA as well as relevant literature on current issues in HBCU athletics and intercollegiate athletics. Lastly, I will describe relevant literature pertaining to Critical Race Theory and sport.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Although briefly mentioned in the preceding chapter, it is important to grasp the historical context of HBCUs and HBCU athletics in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of their place in the Black (e.g., African American) community, and United States (U.S.) of America's history and society. As the U.S. was being forged through the vestiges of indentured servitude, the Black population had no choice but to find educational opportunities separately from their White counterparts. Before the Civil War, the limited options for freed Black slaves who sought higher education were at Lincoln University (Pennsylvania), Cheyney University (Pennsylvania), and Wilberforce University (Ohio) (Albritton, 2012; Gasman, Baez, & Turner, 2008; Gasman & Bowman III, 2012; Gasman & Tudico, 2008).

Following the Civil War, millions of newly freed slaves created the necessity for educational opportunities. The Freedman's Bureau and other religious missionary efforts (i.e., African Methodist Episcopal, American Baptist Home Mission Society, American Missionary Association) spurred the creation of more HBCUs primarily in the Southeast, Southwest, and Northeast United States (Evans, Evans, & Evans, 2002; Gasman & Bowman III, 2012). Although a necessity for these institutions sparked the surge of assistance, one is still left to wonder why only after slavery was the Negro education deemed important?

Evans, Evans, and Evans (2002) opined HBCUs were initially established to appease Black people and to steer Blacks away from attending PWIHEs; while, White missionaries utilized these efforts as a means to convert freed slaves to Christianity (Anderson, 1988). Black colleges founded by Black missionaries (like Morris Brown College (Atlanta, Georgia), Paul Quinn College (Dallas, Texas), Allen University (Columbia, South Carolina)) were, however, altruistic in their intent. Because these Black colleges were able to depend on less support from Whites, they were afforded greater autonomy over the curriculum that was utilized, but were more open to fluctuations in the economy (Gasman & Bowman III, 2012). Nevertheless, HBCUs were forged with the stated intent of providing higher educational opportunities for Blacks and principally provided primary and secondary education opportunities upon inception with an emphasis on preparing Blacks as teachers to help further educate the Black community (Gasman, Baez, & Turner, 2008; Jenkins, 1991).

While the early HBCUs were private colleges, in 1890 the second Morrill Act laid the foundation to establish public Black colleges. According to the second Morrill Act, segregated historically White colleges and universities would only receive federal funding if they established a subsequent land-grant institution for Blacks with access to equitable funding (Redd, 1998). Some of the institutions established through this act were Southern University (Baton Rouge, Louisiana – 1880), North Carolina A&T State University (Greensboro, North Carolina – 1891), Florida A&M University (Tallahassee, Florida – 1887), and Prairie View A&M University (Prairie View, Texas – 1876) reaching a total of 19 institutions (Gasman & Bowman III, 2012; Redd, 1998). Unfortunately, although the second Morrill Act in 1890 called for “equitable” funding for these institutions, strict adherence to this policy was seldom, at best. Subsequently, HBCUs were established with inferior facilities and infrastructure to promote future growth in student capacity (Albritton, 2012; Jenkins, 1991; Redd, 1998).

As Black colleges continued to struggle to find means to fund their institutions, new investors emerged. White northern industrialists such as John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, Julius Rosenwald, and John Slater led the surge of support for Black colleges (Gasman & Tudico, 2008). Their investment raised the question of whether the philanthropic efforts were altruistic or rooted in ulterior motives. Gasman and Tudico (2008) state that although these philanthropists made contributions totaling upwards of \$63 million dollars to Black colleges over a span of 60 years, but that the motive behind these efforts were to create more skilled laborers to fuel their personal industrial entities. In addition, the authors further state these contributions were significantly less than the

contributions provided to the White counterparts of HBCUs. Therefore, with the focus shifting away from solely educating teachers to broadening the depth of education for Blacks by providing education in more fields like industrial education and liberal arts, HBCUs began to see an influx in the development of professional schools and sciences. For example, Redd (1998) states, “By 1915, Howard University and Meharry Medical College had established professional schools for medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy, and Howard offered law degrees” (p. 35). Thus, with the addition of these programs and schools, the number of HBCUs in existence increased to over 77 by 1927.

Despite the limited funding opportunities afforded to Black colleges, HBCUs forged on to continue to educate Blacks and offer opportunities for Black students to learn, but the landscape of opportunities for Black higher education changed with the *Brown v. Board of Education (Brown)* decision in 1954 (347 U.S. 483). The *Brown* decision provided the legal foundation to formally integrate schools; and albeit a slow transition, Blacks were now offered the opportunity to attend PWIHEs, placing HBCUs in direct competition with PWIHEs for Black students who previously did not have access to attend a PWIHE. Although HBCUs still implicitly served Blacks and the Black community, the opportunity for top Black students to pursue higher education at predominantly White institutions incited direct competition between HBCUs and PWIHEs. As such, a new issue arose as HBCUs suffered from “brain drain” in which PWIHEs set out to attract the top ten percent of Black students from HBCU institutions (Gasman, Baez, & Turner, 2008). Concomitantly, by the time of the passage of the Higher Education Act of 1965, which increased funding opportunities for low-income

students to attend colleges, the legal changes had increased the number of Blacks in higher education that came at the cost of decreased numbers of enrollment at HBCUs (Only 36% by 1968; Redd, 1998). As a result, and in conjunction with the lack of adequate funding, some HBCUs were forced to close or merge with other institutions while those that remained open struggled to maintain and attract White students (e.g., West Virginia State College, Lincoln University of Missouri; Redd, 1998; Sink, 1995).

In August of 1980, realizing that HBCUs had been historically discriminated against, President Jimmy Carter signed into effect Executive Order 12232 which mandated efforts be taken through all funding governmental agencies to ensure HBCUs were taking advantage of funding opportunities and that discriminatory barriers were not in place to prevent their participation. President Carter's expectation was that the executive order would aid in expanding the capacity of HBCUs to provide quality education for Blacks (About Us, 2013). Since being signed into action, every U.S. president has renewed the executive order. In addition, President George H. Bush signed Executive Order 12677 which developed the President's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities and serves the purpose of supervising the development of federal programs to continue Executive Order 12232 as well as advise the Department of Education on means to ensure the long-term viability of HBCUs. The President's Board of Advisors on HBCUs still exists and functions under the current administration.

In 2013, the United Negro College Fund (About HBCUs) (2013) reported there are just over 100 HBCUs in the U.S. serving a majority of Blacks from low-income

families. Although only accounting for less than five percent of U.S. higher education institutions, HBCUs graduate almost 20 percent of Black undergraduates. HBCUs graduates account for over half of Black professionals as well as half of Black public school teachers (About HBCUs, 2013). HBCUs continue to be staples in the Black community by serving as springboards for enriching the lives of the Black community and platforms to educate and uplift Blacks. Unfortunately, inadequate funding (i.e., only 0.8% larger increase in revenue than expenditures), governmental admissions restrictions, and institutional control (i.e., *U.S. v. Fordice*; 112 S. Ct. 2727, 1992) continue to threaten the future of HBCUs (Redd, 1998).

Historically Black College and University Athletics

Similar to their counterparts at PWIHEs, intercollegiate athletics on HBCU campuses began as contests organized by students before the formation of conferences and even governing bodies over intercollegiate athletics. Intercollegiate athletic contests were cited as far back as the late 1800's into the early 1900's. For example, Biddle University (Johnson C. Smith University) and Livingstone College participated in the first Black intercollegiate football in 1892 (Chalk, 1976). Other football contests followed, and the necessity for governance became more urgent. Thus, in 1912 the first HBCU athletic conference – the Colored Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA; later named the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association) – was formed by nine college administrators during a meeting at Hampton Institute. Later, three other HBCU athletic conferences were formed to include the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC), the Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC), and the Mid-

Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC); in 1913, 1920 and 1969 respectively (Gaither, 2013; McClelland, 2011). Although these conferences represent only 45 HBCUs, they are still considered to be the major conferences associated with HBCUs.

HBCU athletics has a vibrant history (i.e., national championships, hall of fame players, hall of fame coaches) in spite of the disparate resources afforded to their PWIHE counterparts. Coaches from HBCUs such as John McClendon, Jr. (basketball; North Carolina College for Negroes—now North Carolina Central University, Hampton Institute—now Hampton University, Tennessee A&I—now Tennessee State University, Kentucky State College—now Kentucky State University), Clarence “Big House” Gaines (basketball; Winston-Salem State University), and Eddie Robinson (football; Grambling State University) each have influenced various aspects of collegiate athletics through their spectacular accomplishments and contributions to their respective sports to accent the proliferation of Black college sports. For example, John McClendon, Jr.’s implementation of the up-tempo style of play in basketball has earned him the designation as the father of the up-tempo style of intercollegiate basketball (see Katz, 1990). Clarence “Big House” Gaines coaching accomplishments included the only National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) national championship by an HBCU and a ranking in the top 15 of all time wins in NCAA history (see NCAA, 2013). Despite these historic accolades, HBCU athletic programs were not immune to the social issues stemming from racism (i.e., segregation, prejudice, systemic oppression) that evolved through time for their respective institutions.

Racial integration at the institutional level had a large impact on the sustainability and viability of HBCU athletic programs following its enactment. Prior to 1954 and the *Brown* decision, over 90 percent of Black students attended HBCU's for higher education (Roebuck & Murty, 1993), but in the decades following desegregation the number dropped below 20 percent. Hence, HBCU athletics were greatly impacted when Black athletes who initially were denied access to PWIHE institutions were drawn away from HBCUs to compete for the benefit of PWIHE programs and institutions (Donnor, 2005; Evans, Evans & Evans; 2002; Gaither, 2013). Similar to the "brain drain" of top Black academic talent by PWIHEs (see Gasman, Baez, & Turner, 2008), top Black athletic talent was pillaged from the Black community to bolster the level of talent on the field of play at PWIHEs evident by the changing faces that now represent these institutions in competition.

Currently, the benefits and resources gained from the transfer of athletic talent from HBCUs to PWIHEs (e.g., DI level) is visible through the millions of dollars in revenue (i.e., ticket sales, television contracts, championship games) and the million dollar facilities (i.e., athletic stadiums, athletic academic centers) PWIHEs encumbered due to the talents of the Black college athletes. Subsequently, HBCUs are primarily without the equitable resources of their PWIHE counterparts; and thus, are disadvantaged in the battle to recruit top tier talent (e.g., poor conditions of Grambling State University's facilities; Freedman, 2013). Moreover, HBCUs lack of tangible resources acquired through revenue (i.e., television contracts, media exposure, state-of-the-art facilities) promotes a lower perception of the potential for HBCUs to provide

equitable avenues of exposure for Black athletes in pursuit of a professional athletic career (Gaither, 2013). Therefore, the 24 HBCU athletic programs currently competing at the DI level are continually left at a disadvantage in competition with their PWIHE DI intercollegiate athletics counterparts.

Although the collective perception of athletic talent dwindled post desegregation, HBCUs have been able to produce professional hall of fame caliber coaches, as previously mentioned, and athletes. For example, athletes like Walter Payton (football; Jackson State University), Deacon Jones (football; South Carolina State University and Mississippi Valley State University), Earl Monroe (basketball; Winston-Salem State University), Andre Dawson (baseball; Florida A&M University), Althea Gibson (tennis; Florida A&M University), and Wilma Rudolph and the Tennessee Tigerbelles (track and field; Tennessee State University) represent the high caliber talent. In addition, HBCUs collectively have won several NCAA championships across various sports and divisions (e.g., Florida A&M University, 1978 NCAA DI-AA Football Champions; Winston-Salem State, 1967 Men's NCAA DI Basketball Champion; University of Maryland-Eastern Shore, 1963 Men's DII Outdoor Track and Field Champions). With a distinguished legacy in athletics, HBCUs continue to be viable options for Black athletes, but HBCUs are stifled from their lack of resources (e.g., low revenue generation, older facilities, understaffing; see Freedman, 2013).

The National Collegiate Athletic Association

Intercollegiate athletics in its infancy lacked a uniform organizational structure or governing body. It was primarily organized and ran by students at each respective

institution. As competition expanded, so did occurrences of injury and participation of non-students in the name of competition. Over fear from the substantial increase of athlete deaths, the necessity for greater formalization and involvement of faculty became a primary concern (Smith, 2000).

Thus, the integration of a governing body into intercollegiate athletics paved the way for regulatory policies and practices. President Theodore Roosevelt and Chancellor Henry McCracken met at the White House for a national meeting that spawned the creation of a football rules committee (Hawes, 1999; McClelland, 2011; Smith, 2000). In turn; with additional focus on intercollegiate athletic reform holistically, 62 member institutions formed the Intercollegiate Athletics Association (IAA; Smith, 2000). The IAA changed its name to the National Collegiate Athletics Association in 1910 (McClelland, 2011; Smith, 2000).

Increased commercialization opportunities in intercollegiate athletics led to an increase in interest and increased competition for athletes. As recruiting became more prevalent, the need for more stringent regulations also became more prevalent. In 1948, the NCAA formulated the “Sanity Code” to assist in curtailing exploitative practices in recruiting; thus, with new regulation also came the necessity for an enforcement entity (McClelland, 2011; Smith, 2000). The NCAA formed the Constitutional Compliance Committee as an entity to interpret and investigate violations (Smith, 2000). By 1951, the “Sanity Code” was repealed due to enforcement ineffectiveness and the Constitutional Compliance Committee was replaced with the Committee on Infractions

(Smith, 2000). With greater uniformity and authority, the NCAA continued to grow and profit from the increased commercialization of intercollegiate athletics.

Throughout the 1970's and 1980's, the marriage of academics and athletics hit a rough patch. Increased concern from university presidents yielded greater authority for university presidents in the formulation of an Executive Committee, Board of Directors, as well as other committees on NCAA enforcement and infractions (Smith, 2000).

Effectually, university presidents changed the governance structure of the NCAA. The major push-back from the athletic side stemmed from attempts to restrict earnings, limit coaching staffs, reduce scholarships, and reduce recruiting time (McClelland, 2011). Again, commercialization and revenue generation continue to fuel the debate between stakeholders in intercollegiate athletics.

Additionally, the 1980's also saw the inclusion of women's sports as a result of Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and emphasis on gender equity (McClelland, 2011; Smith, 2000). However, the emphasis on proportionality has been met with increasing reservation. Increasing costs in women sports has placed pressure on intercollegiate athletic programs in which women sports do not generate revenue for the programs. This pressure increases the responsibility of men's revenue generating sports to create the revenue to fund women's sports and other men's non-revenue generating sports (Smith, 2000). As a result, this imbalance raises racial equity issues because the majority of athletes in revenue generating sports are men of color (Smith, 2000). These issues and more (e.g., academic integrity, amateurism, etc.) continue to plague the

NCAA and intercollegiate athletics currently and are exacerbated by the consistent revenue generated through intercollegiate athletics (McClelland, 2011).

Issues Associated with HBCUs and Intercollegiate Athletics

The key issues facing HBCUs today are funding and academic success (Johnson, 2013; McClelland, 2011). At the core, both of these issues relate to a lack of viable resources for the development of HBCU athletic programs (Gaither, 2013; Johnson, 2013). Without adequate resources, HBCU athletic programs are attempting to do more with less than their predominantly white counterparts (Evans, Evans, & Evans, 2002; Johnson, 2013; McClelland, 2011). HBCUs have been faced with inequitable resources since their inception, understanding that at their very essence these institutions were born out of oppression and discrimination. These institutions were founded out of the principle of being the only opportunity for higher education opportunities for newly freed slaves who were not allowed to pursue higher education at historically White institutions (Cooper, Cavi, & Cheeks, 2014). As such, just as in the broader social context, racism and oppression prevented these institutions from being able to offer certain professional degrees as to not overshadow their historically White counterparts. Even today, public HBCUs face tremendous odds in garnering state resources in direct competition with their predominantly white counterparts in their respective states (Johnson, 2013). As Cheeks & Carter-Francique (2015) posit, racism at the systemic level has played a tremendous role in the restriction and access to resources in both higher education and sport. Securing funding for HBCUs and HBCU athletic programs is a challenge merely based on socioeconomic factors in American racial dynamics in

which we see considerable disparities in the wealth gaps between HBCU alumni and PWIHE alumni. Disparities in wealth between Black and White Americans representing HBCUs and PWIHEs respectively could account for disparities in alumni giving alone without exploring any other factors (Johnson, 2013).

Based on the NCAA academic success standards (e.g., Academic Progress Rate (APR) and Graduation Success Rate (GSR)) HBCUs are struggling to maintain and being penalized at an alarming rate (Johnson, 2013). It is important to note that imposed ideals of success can then play a pivotal role in oppression and also be seen as a strategy in which to perpetuate social disparities and inequities. In addition to perpetuating social disparities, these imposed ideals of success assist in creating an environment that devalues the perception of HBCUs if they are not able to meet such standards. This devaluation plays a role in forming public opinion and also hinders opportunities for HBCUs to recruit corporate partnerships and individual giving (Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015). These stringent regulations assist in continually placing HBCUs at a disadvantage and persist in outlining counterproductive regulations that aren't founded in equality. Black student athletes are entering colleges with academically unprepared (e.g., lower academic scores) when compared to their White counterparts which creates academic challenges that may or may not impede their ability to be academically successful and/or graduate (Brooks & Althouse, 2000; Comeaux & Harrison, 2007; Davis, 1996; Eitzen, 2000; Hawkins, 2001, 2010). Hence, imposed penalties on an institution impede the ability for positive recruitment opportunities which ultimately are a detriment to overall program success (McClelland, 2011).

Without the proper resources to facilitate growth in an institution, the potential to proactively seek growth is limited. Thus, the public institutions that rely on state funding are held at the mercy of the legislative powers. In the sporting context, access to potential revenue streams (i.e., BCS bowl games, NCAA DI Basketball tournaments, media contracts) are limited which leave HBCUs at a disadvantage once again, as historically the majority of individuals that have control of these opportunities are White males (see BCS governance, 2013; DI Committees, 2013). Ultimately, the disparity in resources compared with their White counterparts places HBCUs at a disadvantage when seeking to provide the structures for academic and athletic achievement for its student-athletes (see Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015; Cheeks & Crowley, 2015; Cooper, Cavin, & Cheeks, 2014).

Understanding the relationship of racism in American society and the notion of systemic oppression in the direct deprivation of resources to Black Americans, the fluctuation in the allocation of resources from dominant White structures (e.g., NCAA) promotes the necessity for an examination of the relationship between racism in America and HBCU athletic programs resource allocation.

Theoretical Framework

Understanding the prevalence of racism in America, a critical lens is required to formulate viable solutions in response to the endemic nature of oppression. Consequently, an appropriate theoretical lens to challenge the mainstream nature of racism in America is Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT was formulated following the spirit of Critical Legal Studies (CLS), which was created as a means to combat

discriminatory legal doctrine and policy (Gordon, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1998). CRT brings to the fore individuals' social realities grounded in the lived and historical experiences of their particular racial group within America (Ladson-Billings, 1998). In effect, the social reality of nonwhites, or social "others", is one of a historical presence of oppression and discrimination.

Consequently, centering the social construct of race and the practice of racism, CRT embraces several tenets: (a) emphasizing storytelling or personal narratives to formulate analytical viewpoints (Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), (b) holding true that racism is engrained in American society and indeed permanent (Bell, 1992a, 1992b; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998), (c) that Whiteness is dispatched and held as property (Harris, 1993, Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), (d) the interest convergence principle (Bell, 1980; Ladson-Billings, 1998), (e) the critique of liberalism (Crenshaw, 1988), (f) the intersectionality of race and racism with other forms of subordination like: gender, class, and sexuality (Crenshaw, 1988), and finally (g) developing strategies towards the elimination of racial oppression (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Yosso, 2005). For this examination, utilizing CRT functions as a platform to contextualize the power dynamic that exists between the predominantly white structures in place that allocate the resources (i.e., local government, federal government, NCAA) and the dependent party (e.g., HBCUs) which relies heavily on the dissemination of resources to sustain their programs.

Critical Race Theory and Sport

Race, ethnicity, and racism have played pivotal roles in sport at all levels. Sport largely functions as a microcosm of society or as a window into the social makeup of American society in general (Cunningham & Welty Peachey, 2010; Eitzen & Sage, 2003). Thus, just as race plays an integral role in American society, race also has a profound impact in the realm of sport. The construct of race has molded and shaped the relations in this country for years, whether implicitly or explicitly noted. Through both overt and covert forms of oppression, race and racism have had an imprint on everything from the treatment of sport participants to media representation of athletes (see Bruce, 2004; Eastman & Billings, 2001; Feagin, 2010; King & Leonard, 2010). As Cooper (2012) states, “The pervasive racism against Blacks throughout the U.S. has contributed to negative social experiences in various social settings including post-secondary institutions (e.g., PWIs)” (pp. 261-262). Thus, as previously stated, CRT serves as an appropriate lens to both challenge the dominant discourse in sport as well as examine racial oppression’s impact on college sport in particular (Hylton, 2008; Singer, 2005).

CRT has been utilized in a variety of roles to evaluate and examine the role of race and racism in sport from a plethora of issues like: Black male student-athletes in college sport (see Cooper & Hawkins, 2012; Singer, 2005), leadership in sport (see Regan & Carter-Francique, 2014), race in sport and leisure (see Hylton, 2005), and Black coaches in the NCAA (see Agyemang, DeLorme, 2010). For example, Singer’s (2005) analysis of the relationship between racism and the experience of African-American male student athletes demonstrate the necessity and applicability of CRT in

the management of sport to provide a thorough foundation to further assert the tenets of CRT in sport research. Singer (2005) states, “CRT should be seen as a framework that could help sport management scholars identify, analyze, and change those structural and cultural aspects of sport that maintain subordinate and dominant racial positions in and out of various sport organizations” (p. 471). Particularly, CRT has also been utilized as a lens of which to critically analyze the relationship of HBCUs and the impact of racism on resource acquisition (see Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015; Cheeks & Crowley, 2015; Cooper, Cavin, & Cheeks, 2014).

In 2005, Singer explicates that CRT is utilized across epistemological lines (e.g., liberalism, feminism, Marxism, poststructuralism) which increases the ability to deploy CRT in conjunction with various research designs. For example, Singer (2005) points to Parker and Lynn (2002) to illuminate the suitability of CRT and storytelling to assist in conducting case study research. The authors describe the utility of case study thick description and interviews when documenting institutional and overt racism. In the context of this study, bringing the role of race and racism to the fore in the relationship of the imbalanced power dynamic between HBCUs and the entities that distribute the economic resources helps to contextualize the relationship between HBCUs and their funding agents. The composition of the governing bodies that are responsible for the allocation of resources (i.e., land, finances, knowledge) to colleges and universities athletic programs (e.g., NCAA DI Board of Directors, Bowl Championship Series [BCS], Football Bowl Subdivision [FBS] campus administrators) are comprised predominantly of Whites (see Lapchick, Farris & Rodriguez, 2012). Thus utilizing the

lens of CRT, specifically the tenet of the permanence of racism for example, lends credence to the notion that the White structures that govern and disseminate resources to HBCUs operate from the dominant racist frame and promote privilege for White institutions (PWIHEs) to the detriment of HBCUs (see Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015). Moreover, the prevalence of systemic racism, both deep and surface level, structures of racial oppression exist that include an array of anti-black practices, economic resource inequalities, and the racist framing by Whites to rationalize their privilege and power (Feagin, 2010). While not only serving as a platform to illuminate issues of race in sport and beyond, CRT is also utilized as a catalyst for promoting social change in policy and procedure. Making the connection from a conceptual standpoint of racism in the relationship between HBCUs and the NCAA is merely a foundation. Therefore, inherent in the purpose of this study is the necessity to explore these issues from the perspective of HBCU athletic administrators; and thus, move forward in promoting actionable strategies to deter the perpetuation of racist policies and practices that stifle the survival of HBCU athletic programs.

Chapter Summary

In the face of adversity, HBCUs have played a significant leadership role in the prosperity and development of the Black community, both in the past and in the present (Adebayo, Adekoya, & Ayadi, 2001). From their inception in 1837, these institutions have provided opportunity to many students of color that may not have otherwise had a chance to attend an institution of higher education. As described in the relevant literature above, HBCU athletics have also enjoyed a storied legacy, but unfortunately face many

challenges today within the current NCAA structure that place them at a disadvantage to some of their historically white counterparts in recruiting and revenue generation opportunities.

Acknowledging the resonance of racism in American society places the disparities between HBCUs and historically white institutions of higher education in its proper socio-historical context. The dichotomous nature of HBCU athletics and their historically White counterparts continues to perpetuate the notion of the “haves” versus the “have not’s” based on racial oppression (Cheeks & Carter-Francique; 2015). The illumination of the relationship between racism and the distribution of resources in the U.S. provides further insight into the challenges of success for HBCUs. Thus, a critical lens like CRT provides a solid foundation to explore these issues within its social context. In accordance with the purpose of this study to illuminate the perception of the current NCAA DI structure from the perspective of HBCU administrators to assist in understanding the perception of the potential impact of race in the dissemination of resources, further insight may assist in creating a stronger push toward sustainability and prosperity efforts for HBCU athletics.

The procedures utilized to examine HBCU administrators’ perceptions of the current NCAA DI structure and resource dissemination will be presented in Chapter III. Chapter III includes a description of the targeted participants, data collection procedures, methods utilized for analyzing the data, and measures to ensure validity.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to illuminate the perspective of DI HBCU athletic directors on the current NCAA structure and how HBCUs are situated within the current NCAA structure. Previous literature has noted numerous disparities between HBCU athletic programs and their predominantly white counterparts; however, there is a dearth of research conveying the narratives of DI HBCU Athletic Directors. Furthermore, understanding the pervasive nature of racism in broader society and in sport, CRT assists in contextualizing the relationship between HBCUs, PWIHEs, and resource allocation. Therefore, in accordance with the purpose of this study, the following section will describe the proposed population of interest, how these individuals will be recruited and contacted, the design of this study, how data will be collected and analyzed, limitations of this study, as well as the researcher subjectivity statement.

Design of Study

In accordance with the purpose of this research study, the design utilized to conduct the research was a qualitative approach. Basic qualitative approaches can include but are not limited to narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case studies (Creswell, 2007). Understanding that the research design serves as a guide for the researcher to conduct the investigation, the qualitative research design employed in this study was an intrinsic case study approach (see Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995) to better understand both the social context of HBCU participation in the NCAA DI structure and the particular challenges at an individual institutional level. The

case study methodology can be employed when examining a number of different situations and offer insight to expand our knowledge on groups, individuals, organizations, social issues, and a social phenomenon such as (e.g., Black student-athletes' perceptions of racism—Singer, 2002; ethnographic research with Black males in an English cricket club—Carrington, 2002; economic impact of small sporting events—Walo, Bull, & Breen, 1996).

Due to case studies wide range of applicability it has been utilized in various fields of study to include psychology, sociology, political science, and sport sociology (Gilgun, 1994; Singer, 2005; Yin, 2003). Regarding this research study, the case study design method affords the opportunity and can be applied to illustrate in a descriptive manner the particular position HBCUs are in under the NCAA structure as well as explore the challenges associated with participation within that structure for HBCUs (see Yin, 2003). Creswell (2007) states that there are three types of case studies: the single instrumental case study, the collective or multiple case study, and the intrinsic case study which are differentiated by the size of the bounded case (e.g., individual, several individuals, a group, an entire program, or an activity).

Understanding the purpose of this research examination, an intrinsic case study and its corresponding analysis methods work to contribute in expanding and generalizing theories (Yin, 2003). Hence, in this research examination the intrinsic case study is a valuable design method to utilize in tandem with the selected critical race theory framework. In an intrinsic case study design specifically, the focus is on the case itself and ultimately what makes that particular case a unique situation (Creswell, 2007; Stake,

1995). Overall, Creswell (2007) clarifies that the nature of the case study, “. . . resembles the focus of narrative research, but the case study analytic procedures of a detailed description of the case, set within the context or surroundings, still hold true” (p. 74). Therefore, with the descriptive nature of the case study design, the voice of the participants can still be elevated to promote the value of experiential knowledge.

Participant

The participants targeted for this study were a total population of 23 athletic directors employed at HBCUs designated as NCAA DI institutions. These athletic directors are representative of the HBCU athletic programs with membership in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) and Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC). A directory of athletic directors compiled by the NCAA and the aforementioned two (2) conferences were used to identify the participants targeted for this study.

There were three rounds of solicitations for study participants. The first solicitation was via email and phone calls to all of the aforementioned athletic directors and yielded an initial response rate of four (4) participants; one ($n = 1$) agreed to participate and three ($n = 3$) declined. Upon agreement from the first participant, a telephone interview was scheduled and both a consent form and interview guide were sent to the participant. At the scheduled time of the interview and upon placing a confirmation phone call, the participant notified me that they were unavailable and later contacted me to reschedule. However, when trying to reschedule and coordinate a new date and time the participant did not respond; and thus, failed to reschedule. Therefore, a second round of solicitation commenced. The second solicitation for participants yielded

four (4) participants that all indicated their willingness to participate. However, similar to the first round of solicitation, the participants scheduled interviews and then either rescheduled or never scheduled at all. Accordingly, a third round of solicitation via email and telephone commenced which failed to yield any respondents for participation. Finally, upon a campus visit to one of the institutions that was included in the research study, I came into contact with the sole participant of this research study.

Acknowledging that the multiple rounds of solicitation yielded only one participant for this this research study, Robinson (2014) via McAdams and West (1997) convey that research studies with a population of one ($N=1$) can be presented as a case study and utilized when exemplifying a particular theory or construct when showing how its' manifestation at the individual level helps to interpret or explain that individual. Hence, to cultivate the relationship with the participant ($N = 1$), I built a rapport through several (3) informal conversations ranging from approximately three to 10 minutes with the participant prior to the scheduled formal interview. The conversations consisted of a sharing my prior experiences in intercollegiate athletics as a way to engage the participant and ensure the participant that I was knowledgeable and familiar with the environment. In addition, I informed the participant of our mutual connections and interests. The effort to build rapport was intended to aid in participant retention through overcoming the potential barriers of mistrust, mistreatment, and exploitation that Yancey, Ortega, and Kumanyika (2006) describe as central barriers to participation. Through the informal conversations, I was able to encourage the participant to

participate as the initial request I was told that he was not interested due to the sheer number of inquiries that he gets for research due to his position as an athletic director.

Once the participant agreed to be interviewed, I went through his secretary to determine an interview date and time. I initially engaged the participant in August but was told to come back for the interview in October once the football season had slowed down. Thus, there was a three month wait from the initial point of contact and recruitment meeting with the participant to the scheduled interview in which time 2 of the informal conversations took place. Hence, the participant is a self-identified Black male and 50 years of age. He has over 20 years of intercollegiate athletic administration (e.g., Head Basketball Coach, Associate Athletic Director for Academics, Academic Advisor) experience as well as has the distinction of being a former student-athlete at two (2) HBCUs. He has been in the position of Athletic Director at his current institution for four years. It is his first time in administration at an HBCU, thus he brings a unique perspective to his role as Athletic Director as all of his prior experiences in athletic administration were at HWIHE. The participant has a bachelor's degree in marketing as well as a master's degree in public administration which is consistent with educational characteristics identified by Quarterman (1992) for HBCU Athletic Directors. For the sake of anonymity in the process, the participant was referred to under the pseudonym of "Alonzo".

Alonzo is currently at the helm of an athletic program that ranked in the bottom 10 percent of revenue generated by DI programs for the 2014-15 fiscal year (see Appendix E) as well as being situated in a conference that while seeing incremental

growth in revenues for the prior four (4) years, has decreased its' profit in each of those years as well (see Equity in Athletics Data Analysis Cutting Tool, 2016). Alonzo's institution is also ranked in the middle of all institutions in the SWAC with regard to the size of the student body. This distinction is significant due to the fact that over 75 percent of the athletic program is subsidized by the institution (see Appendix E) primarily student fees. While most HBCU athletic programs are subsidized over 50 percent and beyond, Alonzo's institution is situated in the top 40 percent of the most subsidized athletic programs out of all reported DI HBCU athletic programs (see Appendix E). Although the institution did not have the most revenue as it pertains to HBCUs, Alonzo's program was top among net profit from reported information in the *USA Today NCAA Finances Top Revenue Rankings* (see NCAA Finances, 2016; Appendix E). This situates Alonzo and his institution in a unique position, as scholars have noted that the high level of dependence on school subsidies is symptomatic of systemic resource deprivation at the expense of HBCUs (see Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015; Cheeks & Crowley, 2015; Cooper, Cavil, & Cheeks, 2014). All of the prior characteristics and information culminate to provide the foundation in identifying Alonzo as a unique case study based upon his background as well as the athletic program's current position in both the conference and broader NCAA DI.

Data Collection Method

This study utilized an intrinsic case study design (see Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995) to better understand the impact of the social context on operating as a HBCU in the NCAA DI structure. The targeted participants (Athletic Directors at NCAA DI

HBCU Institutions) were solicited in two ways, through email and telephone. Once the participant(s) were identified, informed of details with their participation, signed consent forms granted through Texas A&M University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), the participant(s) were asked to participate in 1 – 1-hour semi-structured interview. Face-to-face interviews were conducted utilizing an interview guide that was developed based on the issues and challenges identified through prior research (see Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015; Cheeks & Crowley, 2015; Cooper, Cavil, & Cheeks, 2014) and the research questions specific for this inquiry (see Appendix B for recruiting script). The use of interviews as a data collection method was ideal as interviews promote the integration of multiple perspectives as well as assist in developing a holistic description of the area of inquiry (see Weiss, 1994).

In addition to the formal interview, several informal, or casual, conversations lasting approximately 10 minutes each prior to the semi-structured interview took place. Through these informal conversations I was able to share my background in intercollegiate athletic administration at a DI HBCU and some of my experiences during my tenure. Speaking on this interpersonal level allowed me to connect with the participant to show that my intention was indeed altruistic and that I was genuinely interested in the participant's perspective and insights on HBCU athletics. As previously stated, during our initial interaction, the participant was reluctant to participate in the research project because of the sheer number of requests that he receives on a monthly basis to take part in research projects as well as a certain level of distrust of the researcher(s) and the intended impact of his participation in those research projects. By

engaging him on an interpersonal level first, I was able to build on the level of camaraderie that exists between shared experiences as HBCU alums, self-identified Black males, intercollegiate administrators as well as intercollegiate administrators specifically at HBCUs. For example, Bonnor and Tolhurst (2002) describe, “There is a need to develop a trusting relationship with participants and to 'fit in' so that the researcher's presence causes as little disruption as possible to normal activities” (p. 7). Whether in the participant observation setting or in conducting interviews, rapport is essential to building trust and access to the knowledge and insight the participant has to offer.

After the informal conversations, I reviewed and incorporated relevant literature and financial reports to contextualize and clarify the intrinsic case study. In doing so, I utilized the Equity in Athletics Data Analysis (EADA) Cutting Tool to gain an understanding of where participant’s institution ranked with regard to revenue, expenditures, and net profit for the latest reporting year (2014-15). I then aggregated the latest reported information from the USA Today report on NCAA finances list of top school revenues (see to gain a picture of where the institution was situated in the context of DI and the DI HBCU conferences (see Appendix D—Table 2). In gathering this information, it allowed me greater understanding of what their financial situation may be personally to be able to triangulate the reported data with my prior theoretical assertions (see Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015; Cheeks & Crowley, 2015; Cooper, Cavil, & Cheeks, 2014) and the participant’s formal interview responses. For instance, of the 230 schools that reported data, no institution from the MEAC or SWAC ranked higher than

146 in revenue; with 65 percent of the HBCUs that reported data ranking in the bottom 15 percent out of the total rankings (NCAA Finances, 2016).

The conducted interview was done at one time and lasted a total of 72 minutes prompted by the interview guide centered around the research questions. The first research question asks “What is the perception of the current NCAA DI structure and how HBCUs are situated within the current NCAA structure?” Therefore, for example the question “What is your perception of the construction of conferences within DI?” was asked to address this research question. The second research question asked, “What is the perceived impact of the historic resource deprivation in the dissemination of resources of HBCUs in the current NCAA DI structure?” Thus, an example of a question that addresses this research question is, “What is your perception of HBCUs access to resources and revenue generation opportunities?” Research question three asked, “What is the perceived impact of the historic label as “HBCU” with the dissemination of resources in the current NCAA DI structure?” Therefore, an example of a question regarding RQ3 is, “From a historical perspective, what does it mean to be an HBCU at the DI level?” Lastly, research question 4 asked, “What is the perceived financial outlook of HBCU athletics in the current NCAA DI structure?” Thus, this question was addressed through the following example, “Where do you see HBCU athletic programs five to ten years from now?” For a full detail of the interview guide, please see Appendix C.

The interview took place in his office on campus as to ensure that the participant was comfortable and in his own space. Additionally, the participant was given the

interview guide prior to beginning the interview so that he had an idea of what I was going to ask as well as to assist in possibly gathering his thoughts prior to offering his responses.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The textual data, or the word for word transcriptions of the interview, were analyzed and coded line by line into emergent themes (Weiss, 1994). As themes began to emerge from the transcriptions, main-categories were created, with sub-categories that coincided with the higher-level themes. Boyatzis (1998) describes three ways to develop thematic codes: a) theory driven, b) prior data or prior research driven, and c) inductive or interpreted from the raw data. For this research study, I used a blend of prior data research driven and an inductive approach to code the data and capture the voice of the participant. Because the textual data was taken from one interview, the data was triangulated with both prior research and financial reports as described in the data collection process as well. Triangulation assists organizational researchers with the accuracy of their judgements through the collection of different kinds of data centered around the same phenomenon (Jick, 1979). Participant responses and transcriptions were analyzed using the NVivo 11 software platform to assist in the coding and organization of data for reporting purposes. Final reporting includes the emergent themes integrated with relevant literature and some interpretation through a CRT lens.

Trustworthiness

Employing qualitative research designs leads to the issue of validity, both in the participants and the researcher as discussed by Weiss (1994). For example; participants

may present a positive image of themselves for self-interest or information can be heavily dependent on context (Weiss, 1994). Thus, the external validity or the ability to know if a study's findings are generalizable beyond the case is significant to understand and is applicable to this research based upon its exploratory nature (Yin, 2003). As Yin (2003) describes, however, case study researchers should not try to generalize to other cases, but rather generalize to theory as is the case with this particular study which builds on prior theoretical implications outlined in the research design section. In qualitative research the researcher is utilized as the instrument; therefore, implicit in the researcher as instrument is the struggle between objectivity and bias. Thus, in addition to validity, credibility also becomes a concern.

Credibility can be characterized as ensuring that the research is measuring what was intended (Merriam, 1998). One of the key ways to overcome issues in credibility is through triangulation (Patton, 1999). This research employed triangulation as a countermeasure for any credibility issues. Triangulation through the collection and analysis of different data sources (e.g., documents, transcripts, theory, and prior research) to corroborate findings. For this research, I utilized audio-recording during the interview for an explicit record of what was said. Thus, having the ability to replay the interview over and over while reviewing notes allowed me to make sure that every word was recorded accurately. The transcriptions of the interview were read thoroughly and replayed numerous times to also ensure that the information was conveyed accurately. In reporting, presenting the data in the words of the participant played a key role in promoting an accurate portrayal of the participant's intent as well as assisted in insuring

that the author's interpretation is accurate. Furthermore, disclosure of information about myself as the researcher also help the reader glean insight into the impact of my personal experiences and training on the analysis of the data (see Patton, 1999) which also allows the reader to make an informed decision as to their opinion on the credibility of the presented findings and analysis. This information can be found in the section immediately following.

Researcher's Subjectivity Statement

Inherent in qualitative research is the notion of the researcher as the instrument. Thus, it is important to understand how the background and experiences of the researcher may influence the study. As a Black male growing up in the greater Houston, Texas area, I had my own unique experiences as a racialized minority in a predominantly white part of the city. Having been called racial epithets as well as refused access to public spaces because of my race, my understanding of race and racism has been one that was learned at a very young age. In childhood I understood differences in appearance, but I also understood difference in treatment as well based upon the constructs of race in my interactions with peers as well as adults. Seeing how I and my peers were treated in school by administration and teachers or being met with apprehension in various settings around the city. At various points throughout my years as an adolescent, between my own experiences and the stories that I would hear from my older family members, I was made aware of prejudice and discrimination based purely upon the color of my skin. Thus, I carried forward with me the association between skin color and the concept of race and the overall impact of race. Upon graduation of high

school, I then carried my own preconceived notions of race and racism with me to the state of Florida upon my enrollment at Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, Florida.

Florida A&M University (FAMU) is one of the largest HBCUs in the United States. Attending and being associated with a Black college in a town dominated by a large and well-known historically white institution (Florida State University) carried its own set of challenges during my matriculation at FAMU and within the city. For example, there were certain establishments within the city that carried out discriminatory practices that favored the white students at Florida State. Additionally, there were certain periods of time throughout the year that police presence was more prevalent on our side of town and more stringent policing throughout the city (e.g., FAMU Homecoming). During times like homecoming, it was a well-known fact that older White citizens in the city and students would leave the city to not be around the influx of Black individuals coming from around the country to congregate on that weekend. There were always conversations speaking about the fact that police were never as prevalent during the Florida State home games or homecoming. Just these few instances and the state of the communities around the two campuses gave me tremendous insight into the value, or lack thereof, that the city placed on these areas. To this day, the majority of development in the city has been centered around the campus of the larger historically White school versus the area of town that is home to the majority of the city's black population and historically Black institution.

It was in this process of life as a student in that environment as well as being a new resident of a city and state of which I had no prior association with, that I gleaned

insight into the vast disparities between larger historically white institutions and HBCUs. Much of the entertainment and focus of the city was centered around the historically White institution especially promotion and support of the athletic program. Furthermore, as a student in the School of Business and Industry at FAMU, I was taught to think critically in both business and my surrounding environment. Through detailed critical thinking assignments in my coursework aimed at problem solving, my eyes were opened to also analyze the intricacies and nuances of my new environment. While in pursuit of my undergraduate, and later, graduate degree in Business Administration, I took advantage of an opportunity to exercise my business acumen and critical thinking skills in a volunteer role with the university's athletic department.

In this volunteer capacity I was able to gain a more holistic understanding of the intricacies of intercollegiate athletics over the next several years. During my time as a volunteer, I was called upon to do everything from grounds keeping for the softball and baseball fields to assisting to develop promotion strategies for engaging the student body at athletic events. Furthermore, while garnering experience within intercollegiate athletics, I also was able to see the financial despair within the athletics program that was unfortunately common among other DI HBCU athletic programs. In addition to this volunteer experience, I also earned the opportunity to intern at Florida Citrus Sports in Orlando, Florida in the capacity of a Florida Classic intern responsible for organizing and managing the annual Battle of the Bands event in conjunction with the actual Florida Classic football game. While in this role, apart from witnessing and being immersed in the immense cultural experience that is the Florida Classic (an annual football contest

between FAMU and Bethune-Cookman University that culminates the regular season for both teams) and its ancillary events that bring together both alumni and fan bases from both institutions, I also had the opportunity to assist in operations for the other events that were managed by Florida Citrus Sports (i.e., Capital One Bowl Game, Champs Sports Bowl—now Russel Athletic Bowl) that featured historically White institutions from the Big Ten conference and Southeastern Conference. The difference in the resources placed behind those events versus the Florida Classic was glaring and somewhat alarming at times considering how the contests were all built on the backs of predominantly the same talent pool (e.g., young Black males). The experience that I gained from that appointment stuck with me when I returned to finish my schooling and started a drive within me to want to develop strategies to get my institution and others like it access to those resources. Thus within the role of volunteer and later in the full-time position as Marketing Assistant/Promotions Coordinator, I also found myself engaged in the sociological experience of being an athletic administrator at an HBCU, being a Black athletic administrator in DI intercollegiate athletics, and representing an HBCU athletic program in a combined space with a large historically white college. These experiences provoked a passion for serving the HBCU community at large and devoting myself to examining the financial disparities between HBCU athletics and historically and predominantly white institutions of higher education.

It is through this journey from student to intercollegiate athletics administrator that I found my voice as an advocate and key stakeholder in the future of HBCU athletics. I believe that institutionalized racism does exist within higher education and

sport. More specifically, intercollegiate athletics; and I feel that it does impact the sustainability and success of HBCU athletics. There is a dearth of research on HBCU athletics and the experiences of their key stakeholders must be explored as discussed in the purpose statement of this research as well as the statement of the significance of this research study. I believe that my personal experiences as an HBCU alum and athletic administrator grant me significant insight and understanding of the perspective in the research setting that will allow me to illuminate the voices of these key stakeholders.

Chapter Summary

To assist in fulfilling the purpose of this study and subsequent research questions, this examination employed an intrinsic case study design method to include a semi-structured interview. The targeted participants were HBCU athletic directors at NCAA DI member HBCU institutions. After multiple recruitment efforts, only one HBCU DI athletic administrator agreed to participate in the research. The participant's responses were transcribed and analyzed through coding into emergent themes utilizing coding software. Measures were taken to assist in ensuring validity (e.g., audio recording) understanding that the researcher is the instrument in qualitative inquiry.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

From the analysis of the data (including textual data, documents, and informal conversations), four main themes emerged. First, *(Re)defining Who We Are*, which refers to the necessity for HBCUs to understand who they want to be and how they want to represent themselves moving forward. Second, *Combatting the Label*, which speaks to the perception of the impact that the label of an HBCU or low resource institution has from a social perspective and how HBCU athletic programs desire to overcome misconceptions and strategically set themselves up for greater success in the future. Third, *Separation and Exclusion*, refers to the perception of parameters and barriers to access that HBCU athletic programs face in the current structure of the NCAA. Lastly, *Resource Disparities*, which refers to the acknowledgement that the current structure displays a disparity in resource distribution as well as an acknowledgement of lack of financial resources in HBCU athletics. In the following sections below, I will elaborate on the aforementioned themes and provide representative quotes from the participant to demonstrate these findings.

(Re)defining Who We Are

The first emergent theme from the participant's responses was a strong sense that HBCUs and HBCU athletics need to genuinely define who they are and want to be moving forward. Understanding that the NCAA is in a period of evolution in which the structure of DI has changed (see Favat, 2014), there is opportunity for both growth and development. In a recent panel discussion at the 2016 College Sport Research Institute

conference entitled “The Multidimensional Components of HBCU Athletics: Critical Analysis and Bold Solutions from the Front Lines” that included athletic administrators from HBCUs as well as academic researchers, several of the panelists eluded to the fact that HBCUs are in a position that necessitates an evaluation of who they are collectively and who they can be in the future. Similarly, in various contexts throughout the interview (e.g., athlete racial diversity, branding, marketing, conference affiliation), Alonzo notes that defining who we (HBCUs) are is going to shape strategy and progression moving forward. For example; Alonzo explicitly states, “We have a challenge to define ourselves and not let others define us. And be comfortable with who we are” (p.19). This statement drawing on the topic of racial diversity in athletes. While HBCUs service primarily an African-American population, as athletics has evolved over the years, more and more HBCU athletic programs are recruiting a more diverse population. As Coker (2015) describes, Black college baseball has transformed from majority Black players to now including in large amounts both White and Hispanic players. At Alonzo’s institution, for example, over half of the 2016 roster includes White players. While this is indicative of the inclusive nature of HBCUs in general, this subtle change also speaks to the need to understand what could be a trend in other sports as well and its’ impact on how HBCU athletics are positioned in the intercollegiate athletics market.

However, acknowledging the unique missions of HBCUs as institutions that were originally initiated with the explicit intent of offering opportunities for Black men and women to pursue higher education, these missions promote the necessity for institutions

such as the one that Alonzo is employed at to be aware of their history and legacy. For example; Alonzo states that, “We [HBCUs] have a passionate history and a group of fans that brings generations and generations back together” (p.16) HBCUs have played a part in the Black community since their inception and are deeply rooted in the Black community of which they serve. It is this tie that builds the foundation for the constant exchange of ideology and influence. The HBCU athletic product, in its’ own right, helps facilitate this process as well. HBCU athletic contests provide a space for social and cultural exchange and empowerment (see Armstrong, 2001; Cooper, Cavil, & Cheeks, 2014). Inherent in this essence of cultural empowerment is cultural expression; which is embodied by HBCU “classic” games. Rodgers (2015) describes HBCU classics as events more so than just contests, and even further, offer insight into the African American experience in sport, culture, and recreation.

Furthermore, Alonzo alludes to the HBCU experience and this cultural expression and HBCU classics in stating, “The HBCU experience is a pageantry that you can’t compare. I love the Orange Bowl, absolutely love the orange bowl. I’ve been to the Orange Bowl, Sugar Bowl, Gator Bowl, GMAC Bowl . . . I’ve been to these bowl games and had great times. But when you go that Big City Classic, it’s a different environment” (p.16). The pageantry that Alonzo speaks of is essentially that cultural expression mentioned above. From the crowd, to the athletes, to the HBCU bands that participate; all of these entities participate in an exchange of cultural expression that is unique to the HBCU diaspora. Similar to the experiences prior to desegregation in which athletic contests in the Black community were treated as special occasions, where patrons were

dressed in their best outfits and communities came together almost in a celebratory fashion for these sporting events, HBCU classics and their consumers exhibit similar characteristics (Rodgers, 2015).

The pageantry is engrained in the HBCU experience and, as previously mentioned, provides a unique experience throughout the HBCU sporting diaspora. Alonzo embraces this unique aspect and as his words reflect, is unapologetic in his enthusiasm for it. As this element is so deeply engrained in the HBCU athletic experience, it will remain as a part of the experience moving forward and thus must be accounted for when seeking understanding of HBCU athletics in a holistic sense. The past and the present are represented in this continued tradition as it remains a part of the HBCU athletic identity whether it remains as currently constructed are redefined.

Furthermore, from the micro perspective the culture of the institution and the culture within the athletic program are intertwined and reflective of one another. As Alonzo describes, “I always like to talk about the culture of the institution and the athletic department is within that culture, but you better establish a culture for athletics to be competitive and attractive for the future years” (p.21). Consistent with this notion of (re)defining who HBCUs are, culture also plays a large part in it as well. From an organizational standpoint, establishing the culture can often dictate the opportunities for success; primarily when the culture is positive and productive. In this context while athletics falls under the broader culture of the institution, Alonzo adamantly implies that there must also be a culture consistent with the institution but also unique for the program that can positively influence the perception in the future.

Promoting and implementing the culture of athletics is essential to the process of forming identity. Whether speaking from the perspective of HBCU athletics collectively or at the individual level, outlining what the culture will be is a strategic and calculated measure (Scott, 2014). Alonzo describes this notion in the following statement:

I'm telling you that we can be at a better level than we are and we can do it in modesty. [...] So, going in the future HBCU's that continue to do this they are going to have to define themselves, identify where they want to go and go there and those who do that the best, and do that the quickest, and do that strategically will have the best success within their institutions (p.29-30).

As stated before, the culture that is instituted at an individual level also resonates when broadening the scope to HBCU athletic programs from a holistic sense. In promoting the progression of HBCU athletic programs in the current structure of NCAA DI, the necessity for them to continue to define who they are is consistent with the notion of successfully integrating a culture that is both representative of their collective historic legacy and contemporary culture. In doing so, this requires a forward thinking approach. Indicative by the sentiment shared by Alonzo:

When they started these institutions, [...] It was in 1800. They were thinking far beyond what they were thinking...that's where we gotta be. What does that look like now? Which might mean we do some things, we can still do different things and stay true to who we are and keep our core. And we gotta do a better job of doing that (p. 21).

Evolution and adaptation are essential to the sustainability of any form of institution across the board. As times change and the market sometimes dictates, an organization must evolve and adapt to continue to meet the needs of the consumers. Similarly, HBCUs and HBCU athletic programs are having to continually evolve in the current landscape of intercollegiate athletics. As Alonzo alludes to, what exactly does this evolution look like? How do HBCUs continue to marry their traditions and idiosyncrasies with some of the fluidity in both the structure and terrain of intercollegiate athletics? Strategic planning suggests that progressive thinking may be necessary in order to navigate the current structure and beyond.

In looking forward, it does not mean forgetting what was done in the past but more so utilizing what was done in the past to inform how these programs can operate moving forward. In this same light, Alonzo states that, “What was done yesterday may not work for today. It might, but you better investigate, delegate, to make sure that your future is intact or going to be. And that does create change. Our institutions are not built around a lot of change. They’ve been in existence since [the 1800’s]. That’s a long time ago” (pp. 20-21) Continuing in this notion of defining who we (HBCUs) are, Alonzo’s statements speak to the collective perception of the past, how HBCUs may have operated, and ultimately if those same operations are relevant today. As previously mentioned, organizations have to understand how to connect the past with the present in a way that provides satisfaction to its’ consumers and places them in a position to be successful in the future.

In similar fashion Alonzo speaks of redefining themselves to appeal to a wider audience. For example; Alonzo states, “You have to have a broad product. You have to attract people and create demand” (p. 22) Moreover, he states, “You have to have an attractive program. Programming where you’re doing well for your student-athletes to graduate, they’re having success” (p. 14). HBCUs are in an interesting position, while catering primarily to the Black consumer, HBCU administrators must also be cognizant of intercollegiate athletics consumers of all demographics. HBCU athletics continues to showcase and be a platform for the exchange of Black culture and empowerment, however, intercollegiate athletics in general has an appeal that is intersectional. Sport itself plays a pivotal role in the promotion of comradery between people of various backgrounds. Therefore, in understanding this appeal, Alonzo speaks to the necessity for his program and other HBCU athletic programs alike to examine how they may broaden their appeal to include wider audiences for a chance of increased opportunities in partnerships and revenue generation streams while also promoting an environment where student-athletes can be successful as well. While Alonzo reiterates the notion of defining who and what HBCUs are moving forward, his words also speak towards how the label of HBCU and low resource institution can create a misperception of the true value of HBCU athletic programs.

Combatting the Label

The second theme that emerged from the participant’s responses was the notion of having to overcome the social perception of what it means to be both an HBCU and classified as a low resource institution. While HBCU athletics has a distinct legacy,

everyone has not been privy to the same insight and therefore the perception of HBCU athletics can be skewed at times. For example, Alonzo speaks in reference to his explicit feeling towards the label of a low resource institution,

We're a limited resource institution. I don't necessarily like that moniker. It is what it is. So, I know that I came from these limited resource institutions. And I've been able to do everything I wanted in my career. I've sat at the table with one of the highest paid in the two main sports. And been able to share my ideas to follow my leadership on things with the best and brightest of this industry (p.17).

Alonzo speaks toward the notion that the perception exists that "limited resource institutions" do not have the same capabilities or are in some ways inferior to their counterparts that do have access to greater resources. This deficit way of thinking is often detrimental, because it can carry over into the perceived value of these institutions. While Alonzo is specifically talking about his institution, understanding that label is applied to a plethora of other institutions, the same perception follows the moniker. What then does the perception become when one is referred to as "limited"? Could the perception have a negative connotation to it?

Additionally, Alonzo goes on to describe the perception that he believes is imposed on them as an HBCU:

As an HBCU you probably think two things; 1) its all Black, 2) they ain't got no money, 3) they doing bad in the APR. Those first three things probably. Now the first two, they probably come and change and so...the other challenges, I mean

those are three things you think of. Now the challenges are overcoming historically, traditions and things that has happened so that you can move forward (p.19).

Some of the issues that have plagued HBCUs, unfortunately, have been widely publicized and thus Alonzo speaks of trying to overcome these challenges in both principle and perception. The public arena and exposure of intercollegiate athletics has allowed access, good or bad, into some of the challenges and issues of HBCUs and other programs alike. For HBCUs, being in the public arena and dealing with the perception already imposed by the label of HBCU and low resource institution creates an unfortunate dynamic that can prove to be detrimental when looking for funding sources and sponsorships.

Inherent in this perception is also the racial component and cultural stereotypes that HBCU athletic programs face. Alonzo states:

Athletics, has been a fabric of our culture, but we've always fought against society that we are more than that. See, it's almost a double-edged sword. To be African American and to be really good at sport. 'Cause you want to be perceived as a thinker, you want to be perceived as a decision maker, you want to be perceived as...those things that you battle. Now these are the things that are not said publicly, but living in my skin I can tell you that there are always challenges. (p.18).

Alonzo speaks in reference to the intense desire to be good at sport, but also to be known for the mental aspect as well. As an administrator, he refers to the desire to be perceived

as an intellectual decision maker to garner the respect of his peers. From a deeper perspective, Alonzo translates that same sentiment into the struggle based on the perception of African Americans in U.S. society. Again, the identification as Black from an individual perspective as well as the institutional perspective carries with it expectations and perceptions. As previously stated, the issues and challenges showcased in the public sphere have only served to compound both the issues and the perception. Thus, the implication of his responses is that Alonzo continues to feel the need to overcome these misconceptions as well as perceptions. An initial start to combatting these labels and perceptions begins with an internal sentiment of pride within the organization and institution.

Pride and a positive outlook for the institution can play a pivotal role in offsetting the perception of others as well as potentially influencing the perception of others when describing an individual's experiences with their institution. For example, Alonzo states:

When you put on that uniform for the school you put on...guess what? You love that school no matter what it is. So it don't matter if I went to Alabama or Auburn, if I put my blood and tears on it, I love it the same. And that's what I learned. [...], I didn't get the notoriety. I didn't get the TV exposure; [but] you can't name one person that I feel had a better experience than I had playing sports at [my HBCU] in my mind. So, the Charles Barkley's and guys that were at Auburn playing, I was loving playing at [my HBCU] just as much as they loved it. And guess what? I don't consider mines any less or any better (p.16).

Recalling Alonzo's sentiments prior, some of the same elements present in the notion of pageantry for HBCU sports is illuminated in these statements as well. Having pride in the experience and institution can supersede any negative connotation from constituents internally or external to the institution and program. A collective sense of pride remains the catalyst for a desire to flourish under the current structure. Furthermore, the distinct pride also speaks toward the culture in which Alonzo describes as necessary to create for success in the future. Alonzo goes on to say, "Just as much as someone may love their school, awe man we love our school jut as much. So, it's good. It's really good. And you have bad things that happen, just like you have bad things that happen at those places. I'm sayin', what you like is what you like. And what you're a part of you're a part of. So the HBCU is just as good" (p.17). Despite what the perception may be, Alonzo insists on the sentiment that the HBCU experience and institutions come second to none. By reiterating that the experience of HBCU athletes and alumni can be comparable to any other type of institution, his enthusiasm combats the notion of a deficit way of thinking. Also, these sentiments combat the imposition of misconceptions of what it means to be an HBCU and operate within that framework.

In addition to a prideful stance, the necessity to reiterate that HBCU DI conferences have something to offer as well aligns with the sense of pride that Alonzo consistently conveys. He states, "We have some very good leagues. The MEAC and SWAC at the DI level. We have some very good pieces, of our conferences. We just have to be strategic and work together to see what we can do to maximize those things. What makes sense? So, does that mean we need to realign? We should look at it and see

what makes sense and still maintain traditions, but look at going into the future what makes the most sense” (p.13) Strategy is imperative in moving forward successfully both in the structure currently or any other structure in the future. The pride extended from the institutional level to the conference level promotes a counter-narrative to the perception perpetuated by the issues and challenges conveyed in the public arena. Also, Alonzo’s continued mention of the fact that it takes a collective mindset and process speaks to ways in which he envisions being able to change that perception going forward.

Separation and Exclusion

The third theme that emerged was the acknowledgement of separation and exclusion when it comes to HBCUs participation in the current NCAA DI structure. To participate in the NCAA at an institutional level, there are obviously guidelines and policies in place to facilitate membership as stated in the introduction section. Alonzo acknowledges this fact, but takes it even further when emphatically placing the onus on choice. He states, “The NCAA is required, they set a requirement for DI. If we wanna be DI, we have to meet that requirement. That’s my opinion. We have the option to do many things. No one’s holding a gun to our head” (p.26). In this statement, it is interesting to note that even though Alonzo acknowledges that there are requirements participation is relegated down to a choice of whether to be a part of the system or not. This seems as if it is a simplistic view, however, it is accurate but the monopolistic nature of intercollegiate sport and the concept of amateurism make the situation somewhat more complex.

This relationship of what it means to choose to participate, and ultimately where you fall in this participation hierarchy is examined through the eyes of Alonzo as well. Understanding that structurally where you are also plays a role in revenue generation opportunities, affiliation has a significant impact. For instance, he states:

You can't get to the bowl game 'cause you don't win enough playoffs. So we're FCS, so you're not gonna be in the bowl games structure. Unless you affiliate with a conference that has a bowl game affiliation. So if bowl games are something that you want to aspire to, you gotta get to a conference where you have a tie in into the bowl games. Or you gonna need to be in the FCS playoff system, and if you get in the FCS playoff system you gonna have to win (pp.22-23).

Initially, in referencing bowl game participation, the structure of DI is called to task in its' exclusionary basis of only allowing bowl participation at the FBS level. Thus, in making a decision to participate in the NCAA at the DI level, you then make a decision of whether to participate in FBS versus FCS. Inherent in that decision ultimately is the decision to forego the opportunity of exponentially more exposure and possibly financial opportunities. Furthermore, Alonzo's sentiments express the significance of winning at all levels. If an institution chooses to participate at the FCS level, then they must also compete and win in the FCS playoff system to have positive value. Winning IS essential to any participation in the intercollegiate model, however, the significance placed on winning may be higher based upon where you are in that structure.

Thus, where you are in the structure as well as representation within that structure become important in the decision-making and participation process. Without adequate representation, opportunity and access can be difficult when taking part in a large institution like the NCAA and DI. Alonzo offered his thoughts on representation from a historic standpoint in the decision-making process in the DI structure, “Well, we hadn’t been at the table. You know? On the grand scheme of things, but our institutions are trying to get at the table” (p.25). Understanding that HBCUs have historically been marginalized, representation is essential to being able to incite change at the structural level. He goes on to say, “We’re not umm . . . we don’t get that kind of [representation] but our teams haven’t been that successful. So, in that, I get that you know?” (p.22). Again, Alonzo while simultaneously acknowledging that there is a lack of representation, he then places the onus back on HBCU athletic programs and the necessity, in his opinion, to win in order to gain any traction in representation. This continued reference begs the question, are the two concepts mutually exclusive or is representation reserved for the winners?

If not winning, then what else may have an impact on representation? Socially, we also understand that the institution of sport mirrors broader society. Therefore, could representation also be impacted by race? In response to this pivotal question, Alonzo offers the statement:

Where we are now, I think where we are now race has played a part in pretty much a lot of things. But right now our athletic programs need to grow and develop and have the emphasis that are required in your programs. We’re an

NCAA institution so we gotta do and we wanna continue to be that, we need to work towards and abide by the rules that exist and make sure to do better. Are there some unfair? Yeah, I'm sure there are. So does it mean we stop? Nooo! You build your program, build around it. Understand the deficiencies that you have and try to improve this and try to get better. That's your alternative. Or you gonna have to develop a whole different league. And that's a whole different discussion (pp.24-25).

Although there was some hesitancy in the response, Alonzo acknowledges a racial component similar to the broader social structure. While only briefly acknowledging it, he then quickly moves towards describing the internal element that exists in working towards potentially overcoming this issue as well as emphasizing the need to work within the structure to which they are aligned. Furthermore, he acknowledges that there may be some disparate treatment in the rules and guidelines, but emphatically believes that HBCUs have to persevere to become better internally to succeed. Or, as an alternative, move away from the NCAA! While deviating from that last point, it is also important to acknowledge that it is indeed a bold statement. In understanding that it is a bold statement, the intensity of that action speaks volumes to the lengths of which it may take to overcome the hurdles and challenges of participating within the current NCAA DI structure. The separation and exclusion perpetuated by the current structure places a greater strain on the institutions when we also factor in the resource disparities.

Resource Disparities

The last theme that emerged was an acknowledgement of resource disparities between HBCUs and their historically white counterparts in NCAA DI as well as its' impact on their (HBCUs) revenue generation opportunities and strategies. The success of an athletic program is highly contingent on its' access to opportunities for revenue. HBCUs, being where they are in the structure, depend on that ability for access to revenue generation opportunities externally a great deal. One such opportunity is the FCS championship. Alonzo speaks on a major challenge in regards to HBCU participation in the FCS championship, "The FBS, hey, that's the big guys. The FCS, we have a championship. Ok, we got a championship. How that reflects the HBCUs? Ummm, not many of our institutions can even do it because of the scheduling" (p.14). So while it is an opportunity at the FCS level, there is a significant downside when talking about HBCU participation. Although, winning is essential to get to that point, it may be somewhat discouraging understanding that even if you reach that point you still may not be afforded the opportunity based on extenuating circumstances.

As such, not only are HBCUs in a tight spot with scheduling, they also must take into consideration the impact of financial resources on human resources and talent acquisition to be able to win in the playoffs. Alonzo gives his perspective on limited resources and the impact limited resources can have on flexibility; he states:

Because you have limited resources, sometimes you don't have the availability to get the top notch or whatever so it takes more money to really guide and streamline what makes sense. It takes a little more money. That's the risk that

you take when you are a smaller institution because some of them may not work out, which does not give you stability that you want (p.31).

Alonzo describes the flexibility in making decisions with greater access to resources. Conversely, with limited resources, he notes that you may have to take risks with your investments to try and maximize what you have. In referencing “top notch” he also implies that limited resources restrict the ability to acquire better human resources and possibly facilities. Thus, it is also important to not only take advantage of the opportunities available, but also ensure that the athletic program is attractive to donors as well. Unfortunately, giving back has proven to be a challenge for HBCU fans as Alonzo intimates, “Our institutions have not given back at the level as they should, so financially . . . they give back in the love and spirit, but financially don’t give back traditionally” (p.20). Alumni giving has been an issue at HBCU institutions for some time now as a whole, and that same impact is felt from the athletic support perspective as well.

While Alonzo describes his appreciation for the intangible support, he acknowledges the lack of tangible financial support. Furthermore, he states that in knowing that finances are a challenge, HBCU programs also have to strategically make themselves more attractive for other donors as well. He expresses that sentiment by stating, “But the biggest challenge obviously is the financial and the resources. And so, at the end of the day it’s just trying to make ourselves more attractive for others to give” (p.20). In describing the necessity for programs to become more attractive, he speaks from a perspective of both in recruiting athletic talent as well as positioning the program to secure greater corporate partnerships. Alumni giving and corporate partnerships prove

to be essential for HBCUs particularly given the fact that the financial disparities are so glaring in reference to both budgets and revenue when looking in comparison to both FBS and FCS counterparts.

Alonzo expresses this disparity by stating, “There’s definitely a difference between the FBS and FCS. It’s kind of obvious. The HBCU, we are, we all can find ourselves in that model of the FCS. We just have to determine what level that we are. And we have to prove in those levels if we want to go forward” (p.15). Furthermore, in reference to this difference he states, “We’re at 8 and half million and many of those at 14 and 15. So the FCS, that 14 and 15 and the 8.5 all those are together ultimately. There are some better than others. So, compared to the 100, 110, 95 that’s totally different. 30 sports, 22 sports...we’re talking 16 sports here” (p.25). A large disparity between both the budget amounts and available sports between DI HBCU programs and their FCS and FBS counterparts exists and the residual effects of this disparity impact operations and the ability to attract student-athletes and external funding. While this disparity intertwines with the resource deprivation at the institutional level, it is also reflective of the dissemination of resources in intercollegiate athletics.

As a result, HBCUs are in a position to have to further evaluate their revenue streams and even possibly redefine what those revenue streams are. Alonzo shares this sentiment when stating, “At the HBCUs we have to really define, focusing on our revenue, revenue funding, revenue allocation, for us it’s primarily game guarantees (a big portion), university support obviously is really big, and then improve our sponsorship, corporate sponsorship and individual giving” (p.21). The primary source of

revenue that HBCUs, in particular his institution, draw from are guarantee contract games. Guarantee contract games are non-conference games that are scheduled in which an HBCU is scheduled to play an away game against an opponent who utilizes the contest as a tune-up or exhibition game rather than a truly “competitive” match. These games have come under much scrutiny over the years as HBCUs typically come out on the losing end sometimes in exceedingly poor fashion. As such, many have questioned whether the payout is worth the perceived humiliation for the contest. The emphasis Alonzo places on the guarantee games is shared by many other HBCU programs as they can sometimes produce a very significant amount of the total revenue for the program. Some of the caution is described by Alonzo stating, “Now with the FBS, you’re seeing schools falling away from not doing those game guarantees in big level sports. We’re fortunate, we’re pretty much, we have those still through ’18. [however] We better think of ways, other alternatives to get that revenue to move forward” (p.21). When speaking about the current status of the guarantee games, he is eluding to the notion that due to the newly introduced FBS playoff system which has placed a greater emphasis on the strength of schedule, many larger FBS schools are moving away from these games in favor of more competitive matchups. For Alonzo’s institution, he speaks specifically on the fact that they have some time to continue taking advantage of these contract games but also have to be cognizant that these may end and they will have to look elsewhere for opportunities.

Lastly, although individually institutions have to be creative, they also are still beholden to the conferences in which they participate. Thus, conference alignment also

plays a factor in revenue generation opportunities and resource disparities. Alonzo shared his thoughts on the significance of conference alignment in the following statement, “So the conferences are really big obviously, you can see they’re growing. With the football playoff system and the way you get in, that has really taken off. [...] HBCUs we have to do a good job and really be strategic and take a look at our conference alignment” (p.13). Conference alignment plays a significant role in the institution’s ability to compete in certain sports, negotiate media contracts, facilitate apparel contracts, compete in post-season contests and so on. Alonzo’s comments resonate in that the NCAA has been riddled with conference realignment over the past several years as many institutions have moved to garner more financial incentives and human resources. Thus, in the wake of the movement seen recently in the NCAA, HBCUs have to be aware of what opportunities there may be both individually and collectively.

Chapter Summary

Chapter IV described the findings through data analysis, which revealed four emergent themes; a) (Re)defining who we are, b) combatting the label, c) separation and exclusion, and d) resource disparities. Each theme was supported with relevant quotes to assist in the reader’s understanding of the development of the categorization. In the following chapter, the theoretical framework of CRT will be employed to further assist in understanding the role of systemic oppression in the dissemination of resources in the NCAA DI structure and how the participant’s voice is illuminated in accordance with previous literature outlining the disparate impact of resource deprivation.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In Chapter IV, the findings of the collected data were discussed with responses from the participant interview, observations, artifacts (e.g., USA Today article), and my own personal experiential assertions to assist in the interpretation and understanding of the intrinsic case study. Chapter V will serve to further discuss the findings in respect to the four research questions posed in Chapter II as well as the intersection of the findings with the previously reviewed literature and theoretical framework. Also, limitations to this research study and future research directions will be provided to understand the benefits and potential of this research study can aid in HBCU athletics.

Discussion

This research study built off of prior research centered around the resource deprivation of HBCUs athletics, and the systemic racism that pervades the NCAA and the HWIHE that are represented throughout the NCAA DI structure (see Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015; Cheeks & Crowley, 2015; Cooper, Caviel, & Cheeks, 2014). Consistent with the aim of an intrinsic case study design, and more specifically the aim of this study, the findings illuminated the perception of the current DI structure from the vantage point of an HBCU administrator whom led his institution to be one of the few HBCU programs to record a net profit gain for the 2014-2015 reporting period. The program's ability to achieve a profit gain was commendable understanding that as reported in the EADA reports, the conference itself has faced declining profits over the prior four reporting years (Equity in Athletics Data Analysis Cutting Tool, 2016). Based

upon the previous literature described in the literature review of this study the program also faces challenges founded by a lack of representation and systemic devaluation of the HBCU athletic product through systemic racism. This greater serves to amplify the challenges described by Alonzo in the findings and contextualizes some of this adversity as well. Thus, due to these challenges and the racialized implications CRT served as an appropriate framework to unpack some of the previous theoretical assertions within the context of this unique case. The relevant theoretical implications of CRT that were illuminated through the findings of this study were the endemic nature of racism (Bell, 1992), the Whiteness as property norm (Harris, 1993), and the emphasis on storytelling or counterstorytelling (Delgado, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). These tenets were evident throughout the findings of each research question posed.

Before discussing the implications of the research questions, a brief description of the three CRT tenets will assist in illuminating and understanding the experiences and ideas of the participant about where they are currently situated within the broader NCAA DI structure as well as how the deprivation of resources to HBCU athletics is rooted in the systemic realities of race and racism. First, Derrick Bell's (1992a, 1992b) critical race theory tenet of the endemic nature and permanence of racism in America speaks to the notion that systemic oppression and covert racism have vastly impacted people of color and their access to matriculation between social classes (Bell, 1992a; Eitzen, 1996). Furthermore, this tenet stems from the continued struggle of Black Americans for racial equality that has remained largely elusive (Bell, 1992b). As a result, Bell (1992a, 1992b) decrees that Black Americans should indeed accept that racism is a permanent

fixture in American society and that it permeates into all facets of governance in politics, economic and social domains (see DeCuir & Dixson, 2004).

The endemic nature of racism tenet provides a contextual framework through which to analyze the relationship of HBCU athletic programs access to, and opportunities for, revenue generation. Both overt and covert forms of oppression, race and racism have had an impact on sport participant treatment as well as the representation of athletes in the media (see Bruce, 2004; Eastman & Billings, 2001; Feagin, 2010; King & Leonard, 2010). As previously stated in the theoretical framework, in intercollegiate sport the governing bodies that are responsible for the allocation of resources are composed of predominantly White individuals (e.g., NCAA DI Board of Directors, Bowl Championship Series [BCS], Football Bowl Subdivision [FBS] campus administrators; see Cooper, 2012; Lapchick, Farris & Rodriguez, 2012). Thus, individuals in positions of authority have the power and influence to perpetuate White privilege through the barriers for equitable growth, development, and access for HBCU athletic programs under the guise of the NCAA structure (Cheeks, 2015; Cooper, Cavil, & Cheeks, 2014).

Second, the employment of the critical race theory tenet of Whiteness as property norm (Harris, 1993) in tandem with the tenet of the permanence of racism (Bell, 1992) builds on the significance of the systemic deprivation of resources to HBCUs. Harris (1993) states, “Rights in property are contingent on, intertwined with, and conflated with race” (p. 1714). Harris further enunciates that through this relationship, the intersection of race and property, subordination has been reproduced by the evolution of historical

forms of domination. Whiteness has evolved from race and color to denoting both status and property rooted in white supremacy. The relationship between whiteness and property is undergirded by the basic premise of the right to exclude (Harris, 1993). Also, whiteness then becomes the norm or a standard, placing different groups in direct opposition to whiteness (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Thus, as whiteness becomes a standard of which to uphold, it then also becomes in essence something to protect. Again, whiteness is deployed and sometimes used to signify identity, status, and property; and, at times each is deployed singularly but also deployed in tandem at other times for this purpose of protection and exclusion (Harris, 1993).

Additionally, the alienability of White property through rewards (i.e., leadership positions), reputational distinction (i.e., negative connotation of Black versus positive connotation of White), and the right to exclude through access denial (i.e., the ability to categorically define what is or is not White) provide further example of the deployment of this norm. Through these examples one element pervades through all levels, whiteness as norm (see Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Cooper, Cavil, and Cheeks (2014) contextualize this tenet specifically as it relates to HBCUs; for example, the relationship between the disproportionate number of Whites as government officials directly impact state funding and subsequently the limiting of funding to HBCUs at the state level. Moreover, the authors also posit that the NCAA structure itself was explicitly designed for the benefit of HWCUs to the detriment and disregard of HBCUs due to a vested interest in preserving their property (intercollegiate athletics).

Third, the tenet of counterstorytelling (Delgado, 1995) serves the explicit purpose of this research study in illuminating the voice of an administrator operating within the structure of an HBCU athletic program. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) state, “Society constructs the social world through a series of tacit agreements mediated by images, pictures, tales and scripts” (p.43). Thus, we construct our ideals about individuals or groups based upon what we consume in the public space (i.e., media—print, television, and radio) and our interactions therein. If the portrayal of these images, pictures, tales, and scripts are negative then we also can develop or perpetuate a negative image of groups or individuals alike. For example, preconceptions and myths shape our thinking and thus leave the burden of proof on one party or another. Accordingly, to challenge dominant discourse Delgado and Stefancic (2001) state, “Critical writers use counterstories to challenge, displace, or mock these pernicious narratives and beliefs” (p. 43). These three tenets help to facilitate the illumination of the participant’s voice as well as explore the relationship between race, racism, and the dissemination of resources within the concept of this research study. In the following paragraphs, I will explore the application of these tenets to the research findings.

Research Question 1

The first research question posed was, “What is the perception of the current NCAA Division I structure and how HBCUs are situated within the current NCAA structure?” Per the data analysis, the findings unveiled unique insights. In an effort to acknowledge the participant’s perspective, it is important to contextualize where HBCUs are “situated” within the NCAA DI structure. Hence, currently there are roughly 350

colleges and universities that have membership in NCAA DI. Of these institutions, there are 32 conferences in which only two represent the majority of the DI HBCU athletic programs (e.g., MEAC and SWAC) (NCAA, 2016). Therefore, HBCUs represent less than 10 percent of the institutions at the NCAA DI level. Economically, HBCUs rank in the bottom third of total revenue in the NCAA (Cheeks & Crowley, The economic state of HBCUs and their athletic programs: The financial relevance and viability of HBCU athletic programs, 2015). Thus, HBCUs are placed in the minority as a collective in regards to the membership at the DI level.

Consistent with the theme of “(Re)defining who we are” described in the previous section, the narrative seemed to be that the future direction of both the programs individually and the institutions collectively, in a lot of ways, is in the hands of the individual institutions and the conferences with which they are affiliated. The affiliation aspect, however, was something stressed several times in regard to aligning like-minded institutions. For HBCUs, understanding that they cannot be classified as a monolithic group, they do however by definition and classification historically serve the same unique mission. Thus, it becomes important and in the better interest of the institutions to utilize that commonality as a foundation from which to build and flourish collectively. Furthermore, understanding that historically HBCUs have been met with barriers to access in reference to conference realignment (see Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015) because of the permanence of racism and its impact on those making the policies and decisions on realignment, gaining access and invitation to conferences with majority HWCUs is limited at best. For example, FAMU is a recent case of an

HBCU that failed in its attempt to move to DI FBS (formerly DI –A) classification primarily because of a lack of resources (see Powell, 2004). While the attempt was made to move up in classification was a source of pride at the time, the financial implications proved to be too much for the institution and actually was detrimental to the program.

Strategy was another point that was stressed fervently, and in doing so, understanding how best to move forward into the future. Therefore, while conference realignment may work for HBCUs historically White FCS and FBS counterparts, it may not be the best strategy for HBCU athletic programs. Historically, where HBCU have resided within the NCAA structure, as a marginalized group, the implications of minority membership and exclusion also play an important role into the access and ease of movement within the structure as previously mentioned above. However, it was quite telling that many of the responses to the prompts had introspective undertones to them. In many of the responses, the participant noted how essential it was going to be for HBCUs to look internally and examine themselves in order to be successful in the future. This is intriguing as we unpack the historic relationship of HBCUs with the NCAA and intercollegiate sport in the United States. As with the broader society, there are indeed systemic issues that prevent full access to all of the opportunities that are present (e.g., reclassification—FCS to FBS, lack of representation in decision making, discriminatory policy on academic success; Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015, Cooper, Cavin, & Cheeks, 2014).

Research Question 2

This notion of barriers to access leads into the crux of the second research question which asked, “What is the perceived impact of the historic resource deprivation in the dissemination of resources of HBCUs in the current NCAA division I structure?” Resource deprivation in this context can be understood as the concept of systemic practices, covert and overt, that perpetuate systemic oppression through the inequitable distribution of resources (i.e., physical, financial, human) to people of color as well as the institutions in which they are represented (e.g., HBCUs; Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015). HBCUs are institutions that explicitly detail that their existence is a direct representation for people of color, primarily Black people. With a distinguished legacy in athletics, HBCUs continue to be viable options for Black athletes but HBCUs are stifled from their lack of resources (e.g., low revenue generation, older facilities, understaffing; see Cheeks & Crowley, 2015; Gill & Hart, 2015; McClelland, 2011). Thus, in respect to the findings of this particular research question, the intersection of race and sport becomes essential to understand. Specifically, when examined through a critical lens.

The continued mention of a choice to participate and adhere to the guidelines of the NCAA by the participant with regard to HBCUs acceptance of that normative remains the key to inclusion and representation. Therefore, as Cooper, Cavil, and Cheeks (2014) assert in their application of the Whiteness as property norm tenet to HBCU athletics, the need for the predominantly White leadership of NCAA DI act accordingly through exclusion to protect their “property” which is the institution of intercollegiate

athletics. Disproportionate representation is a reflection of the perpetuation of White norms projected on HBCUs within the NCAA structure (e.g., academic eligibility requirements, divisional classification, etc.). HBCUs are currently functioning within a system that was not founded with even the thought of their inclusion at its inception (Cooper, Cavil, & Cheeks, 2014); therefore, it must be acknowledged that adhering to norms that are not now or ever meant to facilitate growth and development within these institutions places HBCUs at a distinct disadvantage (Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015).

Furthermore, in acknowledging the significance of conference affiliation and classification on access to resources, the participant's sentiments coincide with the notion that restriction in this access is an explicit hindrance to progression and development. While some cases could be made for realignment in conjunction with HBCUs (see Simmons, 2013), the likelihood and possibility is minimal as implied by the notion of aligning "like" institutions. Consequently, given the unique missions of HBCUs, diminished perceived value in HBCUs (see Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015), as well as the financial means of HBCUs, it may prove harder to find conferences composed of historically white institutions that would match or invite them.

Research Question 3

Race is inherent in the label of an HBCU which led to the formulation of the third research question that asked, "What is the perceived impact of the historic label as "HBCU" with the dissemination of resources in the current NCAA Division I structure?" In direct response to this research question, the findings revealed that due to the label of an HBCU as well as the racial component, there was a necessity to overcome cultural

stereotypes primarily through the demonstration of pride in HBCUs. Alonzo's continued reference of the HBCU experience and what it meant as well as its uniqueness served as a counter-narrative to the current portrayal of HBCUs. Alonzo's experience and familiarity in intercollegiate athletics gave rise to the racial undercurrent; and unfortunately, contemporary HBCUs have been marred by poor APR rates, NCAA sanctions, and overall poor academic performance (see McClelland, 2011). Thus the characterization of HBCUs as poor performing has been pervasive in the public representation. The representation of HBCUs in the public sphere, therefore, serves to diminish the perceived value of HBCUs and HBCU athletic programs alike (see Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015). This representation promotes an image of HBCUs as disorganized, maintaining poor academic standards, and financial mismanagement. To this point, Cheeks and Carter-Francique (2015) assert that the decision of media outlets to minimally investment in HBCU athletics is undergirded by the diminished perceived value notion; thus, reinforcing a disparity in reputational distinction that serves to limit the opportunity for the visibility of HBCU athletic programs.

In direct opposition to this view, the findings revealed that the HBCU experience is more defined by a historic legacy, overcoming adversity, cultural pride and a sense of belonging. Alonzo adamantly testified to his belief that HBCUs have a lot to offer by way of the HBCU experience and have an opportunity to showcase their value moving forward. It is the rumblings of this narrative that expose the pervasive propaganda perpetuation of the aforementioned white normative (see Harris, 1993). As less representation continues to amass in the current DI structure, the opportunity for

assistance on issues specific to HBCUs also erodes. Less representation is symptomatic of less inclusion and thus the cycle of disparate resources is perpetuated.

Research Question 4

Finally, the last research question posed was, “What is the perceived financial outlook of HBCU athletics in the current NCAA Division I structure?” The response was steeped in the notion of optimism. Although, there is a tendency to see some form of gloom from the outside looking in as we see story upon story of NCAA sanctions and violations (see New, 2015), it was refreshing personally to see that pride shined through in the midst of what shortly thereafter came out to be continuing review of the program by the NCAA for academic violations. With newly branded events such as the Air Force Reserve Celebration Bowl which places the MEAC regular season conference champion against the SWAC regular season conference champion to crown a DI HBCU champion, HBCU athletic programs and conferences have the tremendous opportunity to continue to shape their legacy in a positive light to garner further opportunities.

In the outlook for HBCUs’ future, brand development and well trained human resource personnel are essential to providing the foundation to promote the positive outlook per Alonzo’s sentiments. An emphasis on evolution internally sets the tone, but the collective uplift of all division I HBCU athletic programs is necessary to enforce their relevance and viability moving forward. Much like the case is made for the relevance of HBCUs in the forthcoming academic landscape (see Lynch, 2015), the athletic programs that are housed in these institutions must also continue to take a student oriented approach. This mindset continues to push the notion of a

counternarrative in that, much as Lynch (2015) points out, there are detractors that speak to if there is a relevance for HBCUs in this time and age. By illuminating the narrative of individuals like Alonzo in uplifting HBCU athletic programs, these voices serve as champions for the sustainability of HBCUs and HBCU athletics.

Summary Statement

In summation, per the findings in relation to RQ1, conference affiliation continues to be significant in the ability to garner resources and consideration within the NCAA Division I structure. While HBCUs represent a small minority in division I, their exclusion and restriction remain symptomatic of a continued presence and perpetuation of racism and systemic oppression. The opportunity to realign seemingly only exists with a concerted effort to redefine how HBCUs operate and present themselves. Furthermore, a critical perspective was offered through the employment of two central tenets of CRT with a) the permanence and endemic nature of racism (Bell, 1992) and b) whiteness as property norm (Harris, 1993). The two tenets also aided with unpacking the theoretical insights related to the impact of historic resource deprivation (RQ2) and the impact of the historic label of an HBCU (RQ3). Of which both findings implicated the acknowledgement of a lack of access and representation, however, the sentiment of pride and a belief that it is indeed possible to progress with a collective effort also set the tone in the response. The intersection of CRT and the intrinsic case study design assisted in illuminating the voice of an individual in a marginalized population in accordance with the suggestion of Singer (2005) in the ability to utilize CRT in the case study design for this purpose. Additionally, his voice and perception helped to build on the theoretical

implications presented in prior research on the impact of systemic racism and the dissemination of resources under the NCAA structure (see Cheeks & Crowley, 2015; Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015; Cooper, Cavil, & Cheeks, 2014). Lastly, in accordance with that feeling, the response to RQ4 intimated that there is a positive outlook on the coming years for HBCU athletics.

Theoretical Implications

Consistent with prior research on the intersection of systemic racism and the dissemination of resources in the NCAA structure (see Cheeks & Crowley, 2015; Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015; Cooper, Cavil, & Cheeks, 2014), the barriers to access for HBCUs have played a significant role in the opportunities for development for HBCU athletic programs. Although recently we have started to see some advancement in opportunity for HBCU athletic programs (e.g., Air Force Reserve Celebration Bowl, new apparel deals, facility expansion), on a larger scale HBCUs are still operating within a structure in NCAA DI that perpetuates the resource disparities between its member institutions. Thus, it is essential that the development of actionable strategies and continued dialogue persist to promote the voices of decision-makers in HBCU athletic programs. It is through the illumination of their voices that we can further understand the nuances and challenges of these institutions at both an individual and collective level.

Additionally, we can promote the notion of cultural empowerment that is represented in the findings of this work (e.g., the HBCU experience, pageantry, combatting the label) as well as prior research (see Armstrong, 2001; Cooper, Cavil, & Cheeks, 2014). HBCUs and HBCU athletic programs serve as instrumental pieces of

promoting Black culture. It is through the influence of that culture that we may see as pertinent to the collective strategy moving forward. As stated before in the discussion section, the intersection of CRT as a theoretical framework is also a viable medium with which to further delve into promoting the voices of HBCU administrators while building the cultural empowerment framework as well.

Practical Implications

The findings in this study demonstrate the emphasis on perception, both internally and externally. Whether the perception be from the perspective of what it entails to be an HBCU while participating at the NCAA Division I level or of you are speaking from the perspective of what it means culturally to be involved in sport period in the Black community. HBCU athletic programs are up against tremendous odds both socially and economically in the spectrum of intercollegiate sports. Many questions still remain as to whether HBCUs have an incentive to stay in the division I level given the lack of representation as well as extreme lack of resources in comparison to their counterparts in both the FBS and FCS level of division I.

From a practical standpoint, understanding the social forces that are at play in reference to aiding disparate revenue generation opportunities can help inform both strategy as well as the approach to utilize when developing the course of action to take to counteract systemic depravity. However, what can also be gleaned is the necessity to understand the value in working collectively rather than strictly from the individual level. Strategies at the conference level have proven to promote some lucrative partnerships, but still leave room for greater involvement. Understanding that HBCUs

are largely contingent on the community in which they serve, it will continue to be imperative to understand how to maximize partnerships and support from the Black community. Although intercollegiate sport as a whole appeals to a broader audience, HBCU athletics is in a pivotal stage in which, as an institution, understand how to build on the legacy that has been set before while capitalizing on innovation and forward thinking. In doing so, this becomes a call to action of leadership in division I HBCU athletic programs and conferences to ensure that they are making well informed and progressive decisions.

Limitations

I first and foremost understand that this study was severely limited by the number of participants represented in this research. It is in this admission that I also acknowledge that this study was in no way meant to be completely generalizable to all HBCU athletic programs at any divisional level. However, as Robinson (2014) describes through the findings of McAdams & West (1997), case studies with an N=1 can indeed be utilized in exemplifying a particular theory or construct in showing how it helps describe, interpret or explain that individual. HBCUs are sincerely not a monolithic group, therefore, any strategic actions or recommendations have to be made within the context of individual institutions first. Nevertheless, this research study built on the foundation of prior research (see Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015; Cheeks & Crowley, 2015; Cooper, Cavin, & Cheeks, 2014) to illuminate the challenges of HBCUs due to the resource deprivation and systemic oppression they have faced. Therefore, despite the

limited sample size, this piece will sincerely help to bolster and inform any future projects stemming from this initial exploration and beyond.

Future Research Directions

The limitations of this research study immediately point to the necessity to follow up this study to include more participants. Additionally, I believe that this research should also be extended to the conference administration as well. By engaging in their perspective, it may shed light on the level of communication and direction between the conference and institutional athletic administration. Also, understanding that conference commissioners are also responsible to University Presidents, their perspective might also assist in gaining insight into the understanding of revenue generation opportunities within the NCAA model and potentially beyond.

Furthermore, continuing under the guise of understanding revenue generation, the marketing and branding aspects also provide a platform for exploration into the perception of HBCU athletics amongst corporate sponsors as well as in the dynamic of the institutional perception versus the athletic program perception. Additionally, further examination into the classist stratification of the NCAA in respect to HBCUs may be warranted. While further exploration is essential into the gaining of a holistic understanding of revenue generation opportunities for HBCU athletics, the information in this scholarship and others must be transformed into actionable strategies to offset the inequitable distribution of resources in the current intercollegiate structure. HBCUs are in a position of deprivation but also have a tremendous legacy and the capability to provide greater value to intercollegiate athletics than is currently being perpetuated. It is

in this understanding that I hope to continue to see an effort to change the narrative of HBCU athletics and promote the uplift of these programs and institutions.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to illuminate the perception of the current NCAA DI structure from the perspective of DI HBCU Athletic Directors. This study utilized a qualitative intrinsic case study design to capture the voice of those leaders within their respective institutions with the authority to promote change and implement strategies to assist in the progression and perseverance of HBCU athletics. Likewise, this study was designed to assist with understanding the impact of race and racism on the dissemination of resources within the NCAA and throughout intercollegiate athletics as presented through prior research (see Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015; Cheeks & Crowley, 2015; Cooper, Cavil, Cheeks, 2014). The findings suggested that there was a need for HBCU athletic directors and their administrative staff to collectively redefine who they are and how they want to be perceived under the current structure of the NCAA. Moreover, understand what the perception is of the historic label of being a HBCU and the current social implications that come with it. HBCU athletic programs have been historically marginalized in the NCAA structure and are in a position to counter some of the negative perceptions of being a low resource institution and disparately represented in NCAA DI (see Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015). Also, the racial component of systemic resource deprivation calls for a reevaluation of what strategies can be employed to combat these oppressive forces.

While the findings of this study present a single perspective into the overall perceptions of the current NCAA DI structure, this research does provide a valuable look into the current experiences of HBCU athletic administration under the current landscape of which HBCUs consistently are in the bottom 10 percent of revenue generation in NCAA DI while autonomy promotes even more distinction between the haves and the have not's. This research study sought to build on the current literature and theoretical assertions surrounding HBCU athletics, in particular, the revenue generation aspects and the intersection of race and sport organizations. The illumination of this voice in respect to those assertions is consistent with what Robinson (2014) asserts is the value of an N=1 in an intrinsic case study in which this research sought to exemplify the perception of the impact of a systematic lack of access to resources for the continued viability of HBCU athletic programs. The findings of this study further illuminate the experience of HBCU athletic administration in working to overcome misrepresentation, lack of representation in decision making, resource disparities, and exclusion. Similar to the charge set forth by Singer (2005) in which he, "... challenges sport management scholars to expand their horizons and engage in an intense study of CRT, meaningful dialogue, and eventually, action that could improve sport management research theory and practice" (p.476), this piece seeks increase the dialogue on the intersection of systemic oppression and intercollegiate sport such that actionable strategies can be developed.

Still, this research seeks to add to the broader field of sport management by adding to and filling the gap on the research and literature on HBCU athletics' issues and adversity. More specifically, this study provided an athletic director's experiential

insight into the effects of limited resources in intercollegiate athletics as a whole.

Although HBCUs make up a significant portion of low resource institutions in the DI structure, they also have historically white counterparts that may also benefit from an understanding of strategies to reposition themselves in the NCAA DI structure as well like the Limited Resource Pilot program described by Melvin Johnson (2013). The evolution of a more “class” based system may place low resource HWIHE in a position to also have to find other ways of generating revenue for sustainability.

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APPENDIX A
CONSENT FORM

Project Title: NCAA DI HBCU Athletic Directors' perspectives on the current NCAA funding structure

You are invited to take part in a research study being conducted by Jeremy Cheeks, a researcher from Texas A&M University. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. If you decide you do not want to participate, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits you normally would have.

Why Is This Study Being Done?

The purpose of this study is to illuminate the perception of the current NCAA DI funding structure from the perspective of HBCU athletic administrators, primarily DI HBCU Athletic Directors.

Why Am I Being Asked To Be In This Study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you are an athletic director at an NCAA DI member institution in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference or Southwestern Athletic Conference.

How Many People Will Be Asked To Be In This Study?

23 people (participants) will be invited to participate in this study.

What Are the Alternatives to being in this study?

The alternative to being in the study is not to participate.

What Will I Be Asked To Do In This Study?

You will be asked to candidly answer a few questions in an interview format. Your participation in this study will last up to 45-60 minutes and may include up to two interviews if time permits.

Will Photos, Video or Audio Recordings Be Made Of Me during the Study?

The researchers will make an audio recording during the study so that an accurate transcription of the interview can be obtained only if you give your permission to do so. Indicate your decision below by initialing in the space provided.

_____ I give my permission for audio recordings to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

_____ I do not give my permission for audio recordings to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

Are There Any Risks To Me?

The things that you will be doing are no more/greater than risks than you would come across in everyday life.

Although the researchers have tried to avoid risks, you may feel that some questions that are asked of you will be stressful or upsetting. You do not have to answer anything you do not want to.

Will There Be Any Costs To Me?

Aside from your time, there are no costs for taking part in the study.

Will I Be Paid To Be In This Study?

You will not be paid for being in this study.

Will Information From This Study Be Kept Private?

The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only the protocol director, Jeremy Cheeks, and principal investigator, Dr. Akilah Carter-Francique will have access to the records.

Information about you will be stored in a locked file cabinet and computer files will be protected with a password. This consent form will be filed securely in an official area.

People who have access to your information include the Principal Investigator and research study personnel. Representatives of regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and entities such as the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program may access your records to make sure the study is being run correctly and that information is collected properly.

Information about you and related to this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law.

Who may I Contact for More Information?

You may contact the Protocol Director, Jeremy Cheeks, M.B.A., to tell him about a concern or complaint about this research at 713-204-3944 or Gcheeks@hlkn.tamu.edu. You may also contact the Primary Investigator, Dr. Akilah Carter-Francique at 979-458-3941 or Arfrancique@hlkn.tamu.edu.

For questions about your rights as a research participant; or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you may call the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program office at (979) 458-4067 or irb@tamu.edu.

What if I Change My Mind About Participating?

This research is voluntary and you have the choice whether or not to be in this research study. You may decide to not begin or to stop participating at any time. If you choose not to be in this study or stop being in the study, there will be no effect to you. Any new information discovered about the research will be provided to you. This information could affect your willingness to continue your participation.

APPENDIX B
RECRUITING SCRIPT

Greetings,

I am Jeremy Cheeks, a Sport Management PhD candidate from Texas A&M University. Currently, I am in the process of exploring present perceptions of the NCAA DI funding structure from the perspective of Historically Black College and University Athletic Directors. You were selected because of your current appointment as an Athletic Director in an institution that participates in either the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference or Southwestern Athletic Conference. Therefore, if you are interested in sharing some insight on this topic, I am requesting your participation in a single 30-45 minute phone interview. Understanding that your schedule is generally busy, I would also be willing to have two shorter conversations in order to accommodate your schedule.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me via email at Gcheeks@hlkn.tamu.edu or telephone at (713)204-3944. Your participation will be of great assistance and greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,
Jeremy Cheeks, M.B.A.
PhD Candidate, Sport Management
Department of Health and Kinesiology
Texas A&M University
Gcheeks@hlkn.tamu.edu
713-204-3944

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction: I am Jeremy Cheeks, a sports management Ph.D. student at Texas A&M University. I wanted to first give you insight as to the purpose of this study before proceeding; this study is designed to illuminate your perspective as an Athletic Director at a HBCU on the current structure of the NCAA Division-I as well as the dissemination of resources at the NCAA Division-I level.

Personal Background:

- Tell me a little about yourself
 - How long have you worked in college athletics?
 - What positions have you held in college athletics?
 - What institutions have you worked at in college athletics?
1. (RQ 1) What is the perception of the current NCAA DI structure and how HBCUs are situated within the current NCAA structure?
 - Tell me your thoughts on the current construction of conferences in the NCAA DI?
 - What is your perception of the construction of conferences within the DI?
 - How do you think the construction of the conferences with DI affect the FBS and FCS classification?
 - What is your perception of where HBCUs are situated within the current NCAA structure?
 2. (RQ 2) What is the perceived impact of the historic resource deprivation in the dissemination of resources of HBCUs in the current NCAA DI structure?
 - What is your perception of HBCUs access to resources and revenue generation opportunities?
 - Bowl game participation
 - Media partnerships
 - Basketball fund distribution

- Corporate sponsorships
 - Do you feel race plays a role in the financial relationship of HBCUs and the NCAA? Y/N. Please explain.
- 3. (RQ3) What is the perceived impact of the historic label as “HBCU” with the dissemination of resources in the current NCAA DI structure?**
- From a historical perspective, what does it mean to be an HBCU at the DI level?
 - What issues do HBCUs at the DI level currently face? (i.e., acquisition of resources, recruitment of coaches/staff/athletes)
 - What are your thoughts about the representation of HBCUs and their conferences at the DI level?
 - Do you feel that HBCUs and their conferences’ issues are being addressed by the NCAA? Y/N. Please explain
- 4. (RQ 4) What is the perceived financial outlook of HBCU athletics in the current NCAA DI structure?**
- Based on the current dissemination of financial resources, what steps/strategies are you and your athletic program taking to address your current state?
 - Where do you see HBCU athletic programs five to ten years from now? (e.g., your institution, HBCUs as a whole).

Closing

- Is there anything that you would like to add before we close?
- Is there anything you would like to know about me or this research project?

APPENDIX D

TABLE 1: QUOTES, MAIN THEMES AND SUB THEMES FROM FINDINGS

Theme Subthemes	Quote
(Re)defining who we are attractive programming, passionate history, cultural evolution, promote mass appeal, pageantry	<p>“You have to have an attractive program. Programming where you’re doing well for your student-athletes to graduate, they’re having success.”</p> <p>“You have to have a broad product. You have to attract people and create demand.”</p> <p>“I always like to talk about the culture of the institution and the athletic department is within that culture, but you better establish a culture for athletics to be competitive and attractive for the future years.”</p> <p>“What was done yesterday may not work for today.”</p> <p>“The HBCU experience is a pageantry that you can’t compare.”</p> <p>“We have a passionate history and a group of fans that brings generations and generations back together.”</p>

TABLE 1 CONTINUED

Theme Subthemes	Quote
	<p>“Going in the future HBCU’s that continue to do this they are going to have to define themselves, identify where they want to go and go there and those who do that the best, and do that the quickest, and do that strategically will have the best success within their institutions.”</p> <p>“We have a challenge to define ourselves and not let others define us.”</p> <p>“When they started these institutions, [...] It was in 1800. They were thinking far beyond what they were thinking...that’s where we gotta be. What does that look like now? Which might mean we do some things, we can still do different things and stay true to who we are and keep our core. And we gotta do a better job of doing that.”</p>
Combatting the label pride, cultural stereotyping, alignment with like institutions, strategic positioning, achieving more with less	<p>“We’re a limited resource institution. I don’t necessarily like that moniker”</p> <p>“As an HBCU you probably think two things; 1) it’s all Black, 2) they ain’t got no money, 3) they doing bad in the APR...”</p> <p>“You fighting a culture that athletics...athletics, has been a fabric of our culture, but we’ve always fought against society that we are more than that.”</p>

TABLE I CONTINUED

Theme Subthemes	Quote
	<p>“When you put on that uniform for the school you put on...guess what? You love that school no matter what it is. So it don’t matter if I went to Alabama Auburn, if I put my blood and tears on it, I love it the same.”</p> <p>“Just as much as someone may love their school, awe man we love our school jut as much.”</p> <p>“We have some very food pieces, of our conferences. We just have to be strategic and work together to see what we can do to maximize those things.”</p>
Separation and exclusion racial impact on treatment, secession, evolution of classification, access through success, adherence to guidelines, lack of representation, take advantage of current opportunities	<p>“The NCAA is required, they set a requirement for DI. If we wanna be DI, we have to meet that requirement. That’s my opinion. We have the option to do many things. No one’s holding a gun to our head.”</p> <p>“Yeah, we’re not umm...we don’t get that kind of representation but our teams haven’t been that successful.”</p> <p>“Well, we hadn’t been at the table. You know? On the grand scheme of things, but our institutions are trying to get at the table.”</p>

TABLE 1 CONTINUED

Theme Subthemes	Quote
	<p>“I’m sure it has, but you know...where we are now, I think where we are now race has played a part in pretty much a lot of things.”</p> <p>“So we’re FCS, so you’re not gonna be in the bowl games structure. Unless you affiliate with a conference that has a bowl game affiliation.”</p> <p>“So if bowl games are something that you want to aspire to, you gotta get to a conference where you have a tie in into the bowl games. Or you gonna need to be in the FCS playoff system, and if you get in the FCS playoff system you gonna have to win.”</p> <p>“I want to go there; I want the chance to play in that. I do. I think we can get good teams to there. I don’t know how far we’ll go, but we can be better.”</p>
Resource disparities disparaging structure, conference dollars, outsourcing, ownership of participation, lack of financial support, redefine revenue streams	<p>“The FCS, we have a championship. Ok, we got a championship. How that reflects the HBCUs? Ummm, not many of our institutions can even do it because of the scheduling.”</p>

TABLE 1 CONTINUED

Theme Subthemes	Quote
	<p>“There’s definitely a difference between the FBS and FCS. It’s kind of obvious. The HBCU, we are, we all can find ourselves in that model of the FCS. We just have to determine what level that we are. And we have to prove in those levels if we want to go forward.”</p> <p>“So the conferences are really big obviously, you can see they’re growing. With the football playoff system and the way you get in, that has really taken off. [...] HBCUs we have to do a good job and really be strategic and take a look at our conference alignment.”</p> <p>“At the HBCUs we have to really define, focusing on our revenue, revenue funding, revenue allocation, for us it’s primarily game guarantees (a big portion), university support obviously is really big, and then improve our sponsorship, corporate sponsorship and individual giving.”</p> <p>“We better think of ways, other alternatives to get that revenue to move forward”</p> <p>“They’re different because of...we’re at 8 and half million and many of those at 14 and 15. So the FCS, that 14 and 15 and the 8.5 all those are together ultimately. There are some better than others. So, compared to the hundred, hundred and 10, 95 that’s totally different. 30 sports, 22 sports...we’re talking 16 sports here.”</p>

TABLE 1 CONTINUED

Theme Subthemes	Quote
	<p>“Because you have limited resources, sometimes you don’t have the availability to get the top notch or whatever so it takes more money to really guide and streamline what makes sense. It takes a little more money.”</p> <p>“Our institutions have not given back at the level as they should, so financially...they give back in the love and spirit, but financially don’t give back traditionally.”</p> <p>“But the biggest challenge obviously is the financial and the resources. And so, at the end of the day it’s just trying to make ourselves more attractive for others to give.”</p>

APPENDIX E

TABLE 2: NCAA DI 2014-2015 REVENUE GENERATION RANKINGS Data compiled from USA Today

NCAA Finances Top School Revenue Rankings (NCAA Finances, 2016):

Rank	School	CONF	Total Revenue	Total Expenses	Net Profit	Total Subsidies	% subsidy
1	Texas A&M University	SEC	\$ 192,608,876	\$ 109,313,651	\$83,295,225	\$ -	0
2	Texas	Big 12	\$ 183,521,028	\$ 173,248,133	\$10,272,895	\$ -	0
3	Ohio State	Big Ten	\$ 167,166,065	\$ 154,033,208	\$13,132,857	\$ -	0
4	Michigan	Big Ten	\$ 152,477,026	\$ 151,144,964	\$ 1,332,062	\$ 263,345	0.17
5	Alabama	SEC	\$ 148,911,674	\$ 132,354,913	\$16,556,761	\$ 2,616,895	1.76
6	Florida	SEC	\$ 147,105,242	\$ 125,384,443	\$21,720,799	\$ 1,856,122	1.26
7	LSU	SEC	\$ 138,642,237	\$ 121,947,775	\$16,694,462	\$ -	0
8	Oklahoma	Big 12	\$ 134,269,349	\$ 123,017,251	\$11,252,098	\$ -	0
9	Tennessee	SEC	\$ 126,584,033	\$ 113,413,325	\$13,170,708	\$ -	0
10	Penn State	Big Ten	\$ 125,720,619	\$ 122,271,407	\$ 3,449,212	\$ -	0
146	Norfolk State	MEAC	\$ 16,081,787	\$ 16,081,787	\$ -	\$ 13,487,263	83.87
162	Alabama State	SWAC	\$ 14,597,561	\$ 14,597,561	\$ -	\$ 11,865,204	81.28
180	Southern	SWAC	\$ 12,914,360	\$ 13,433,528	\$ (519,168)	\$ 9,054,700	70.11
185	Delaware State	MEAC	\$ 12,452,200	\$ 12,452,200	\$ -	\$ 10,449,099	83.91
188	Florida A&M	MEAC	\$ 12,376,884	\$ 12,351,422	\$ 25,462	\$ 8,574,513	69.28
194	North Carolina A&T	MEAC	\$ 11,914,162	\$ 11,873,742	\$ 40,420	\$ 8,755,155	73.49
196	North Carolina Central	MEAC	\$ 11,820,733	\$ 11,737,458	\$ 83,275	\$ 8,357,599	70.7
208	Prairie View A&M	SWAC	\$ 10,323,593	\$ 10,363,199	\$ (39,606)	\$ 8,040,766	77.89
209	Morgan State	MEAC	\$ 10,307,709	\$ 11,734,582	\$ (1,426,873)	\$ 8,678,065	84.19
210	Alabama A&M	SWAC	\$ 10,230,614	\$ 10,015,107	\$ 215,507	\$ 7,902,407	77.24
211	Texas Southern	SWAC	\$ 10,222,016	\$ 10,222,016	\$ -	\$ 7,986,311	78.13

TABLE 2 CONTINUED

Rank	School	CONF	Total Revenue	Total Expenses	Net Profit	Total Subsidies	% subsidy
215	South Carolina State	MEAC	\$ 9,175,400	\$ 9,179,400	\$ (4,000)	\$ 6,837,025	74.51
218	Jackson State	SWAC	\$ 8,361,416	\$ 8,361,416	\$ -	\$ 5,925,507	70.87
222	Alcorn State	SWAC	\$ 7,259,462	\$ 7,368,686	\$ (109,224)	\$ 5,382,940	74.15
224	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	SWAC	\$ 6,590,482	\$ 6,622,798	\$ (32,316)	\$ 4,783,415	72.58
226	Savannah State	MEAC	\$ 6,100,959	\$ 6,409,247	\$ (308,288)	\$ 3,887,111	63.71
227	Maryland-Eastern Shore	MEAC	\$ 5,931,218	\$ 5,931,218	\$ -	\$ 4,948,320	83.43
228	Grambling State	SWAC	\$ 5,367,410	\$ 7,411,733	\$(2,044,323)	\$ 2,846,491	53.03
230	Mississippi Valley State	SWAC	\$ 4,032,302	\$ 4,075,217	\$ (42,915)	\$ 2,290,035	56.79
231	Coppin State	MEAC	\$ 3,442,399	\$ 3,881,777	\$ (439,378)	\$ 2,570,994.00	74.69